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DOCTOR WHO

PRISONERS OF TIME

50 YEARS

BBC

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DOCTOR WHO

PRISONERS OF TIME

BBC

DOCTOR WHO

PRISONERS OF TIME

8TH DOCTOR
1996

The Doctor is an alien, the last of the powerful Time Lords of the planet Gallifrey. He is an intrepid traveller through time and space, armed with an incredible intelligence. He travels alone except for the human companions he befriends, briefly sharing his life with them and showing them the astonishing wonders of the universe.

Written by
Scott & David Tipton
Art by
Roger Langridge
Colors by
Charlie Kirchoff
Lettering by
Tom B. Long
Edited by
Denton J. Tipton

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IDW founded by Ted Adams, Alex Garner, Kris Oprisko, and Robbie Robbins

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Greg Goldstein, President & COO
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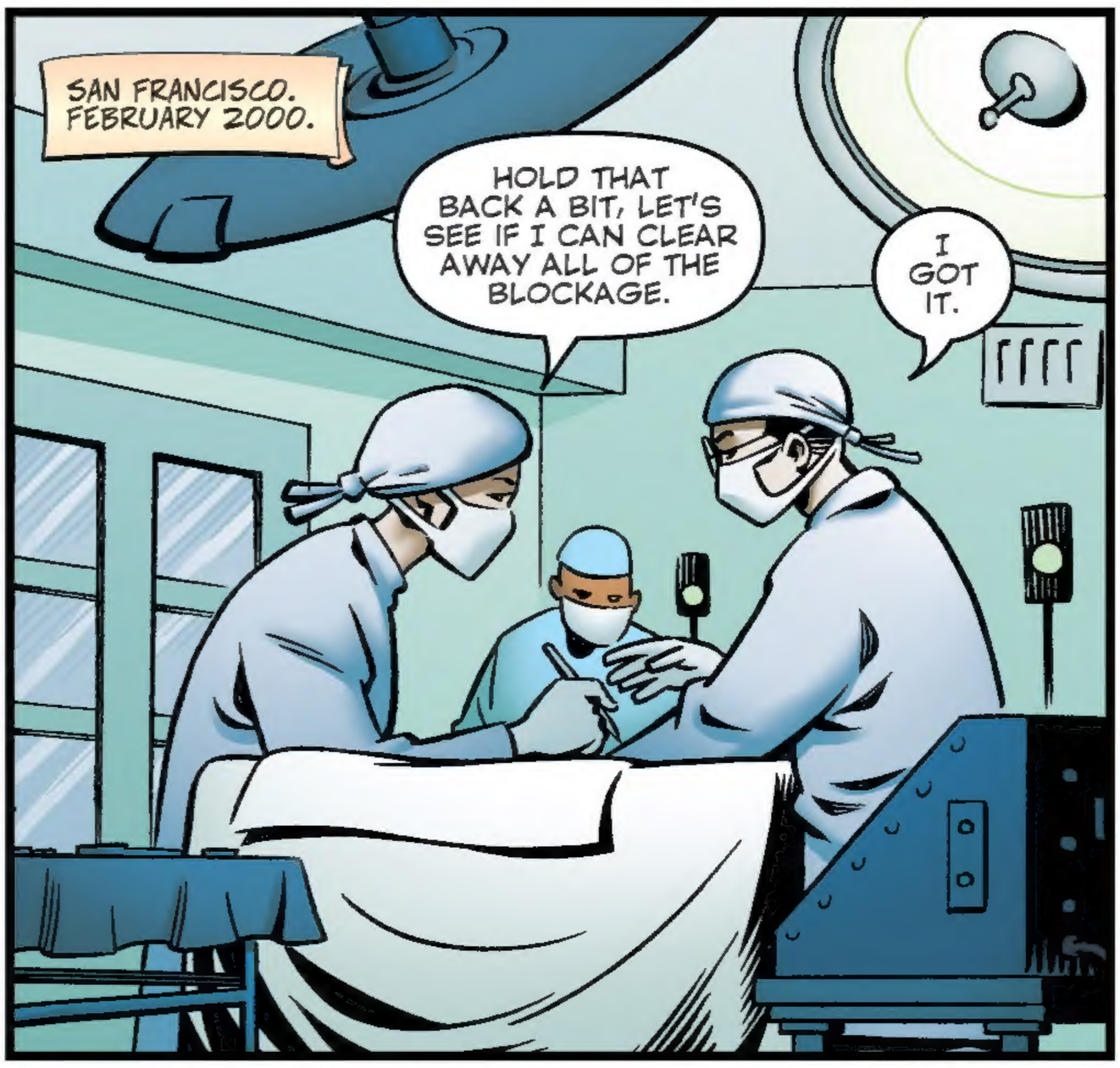
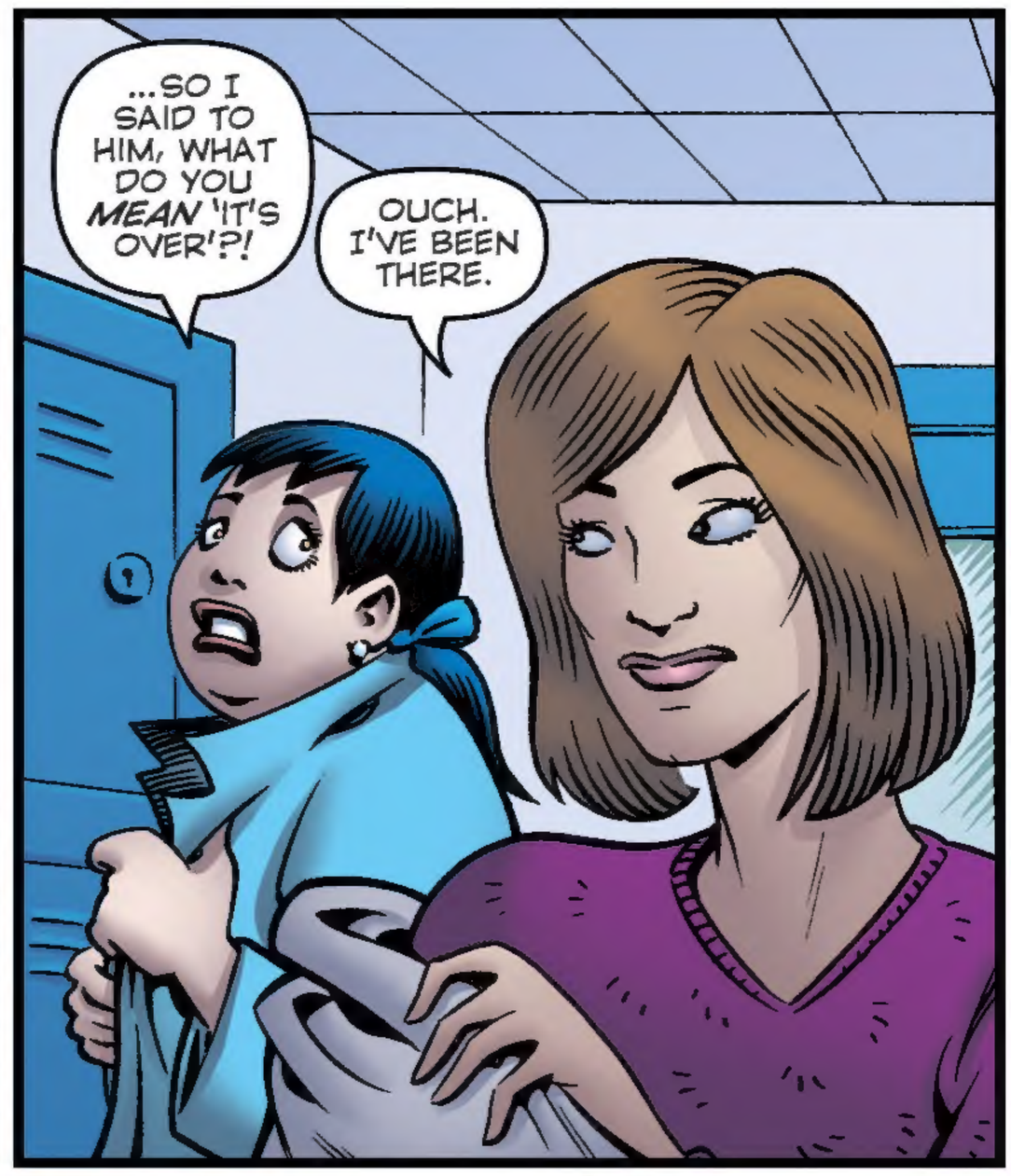
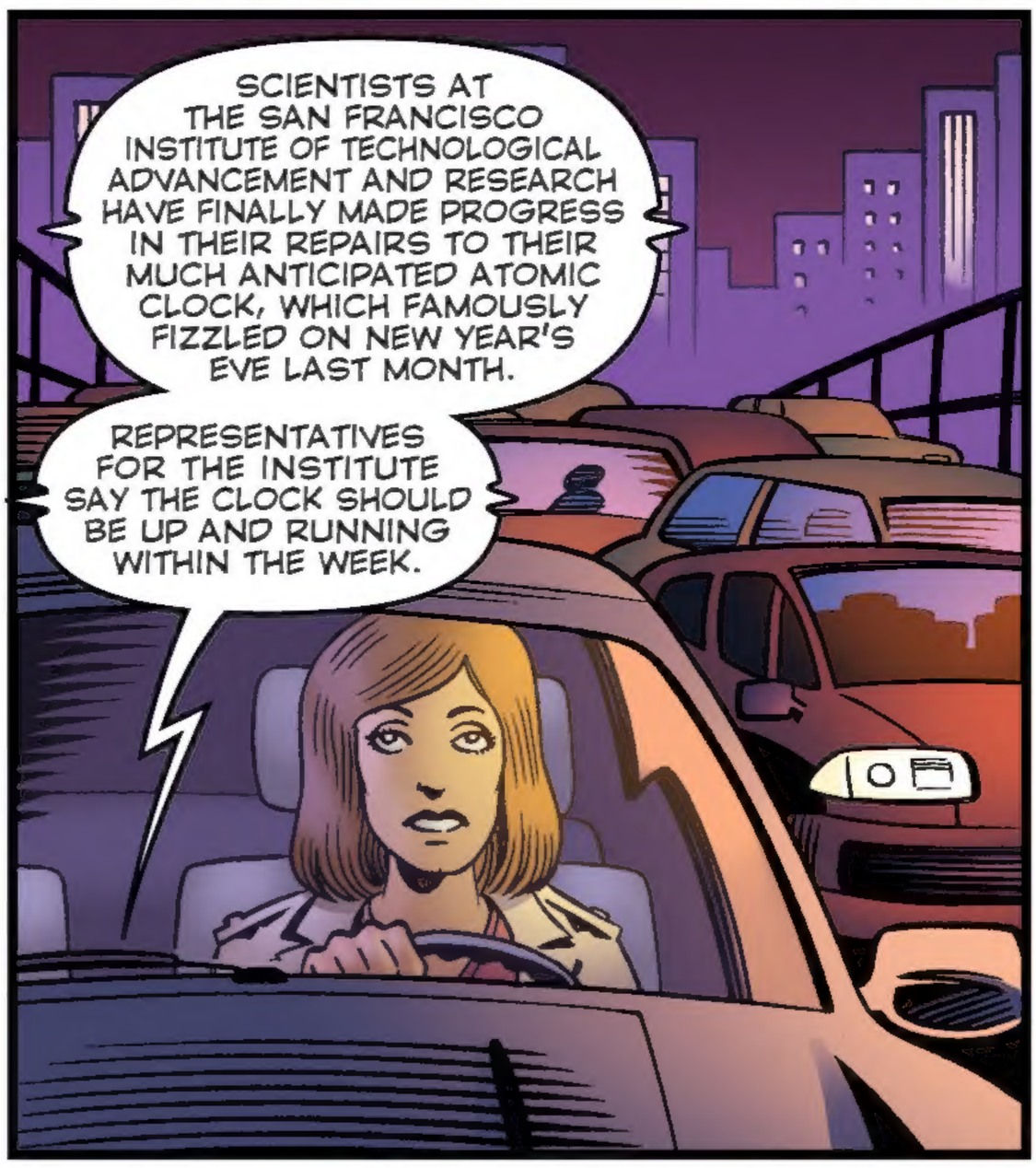
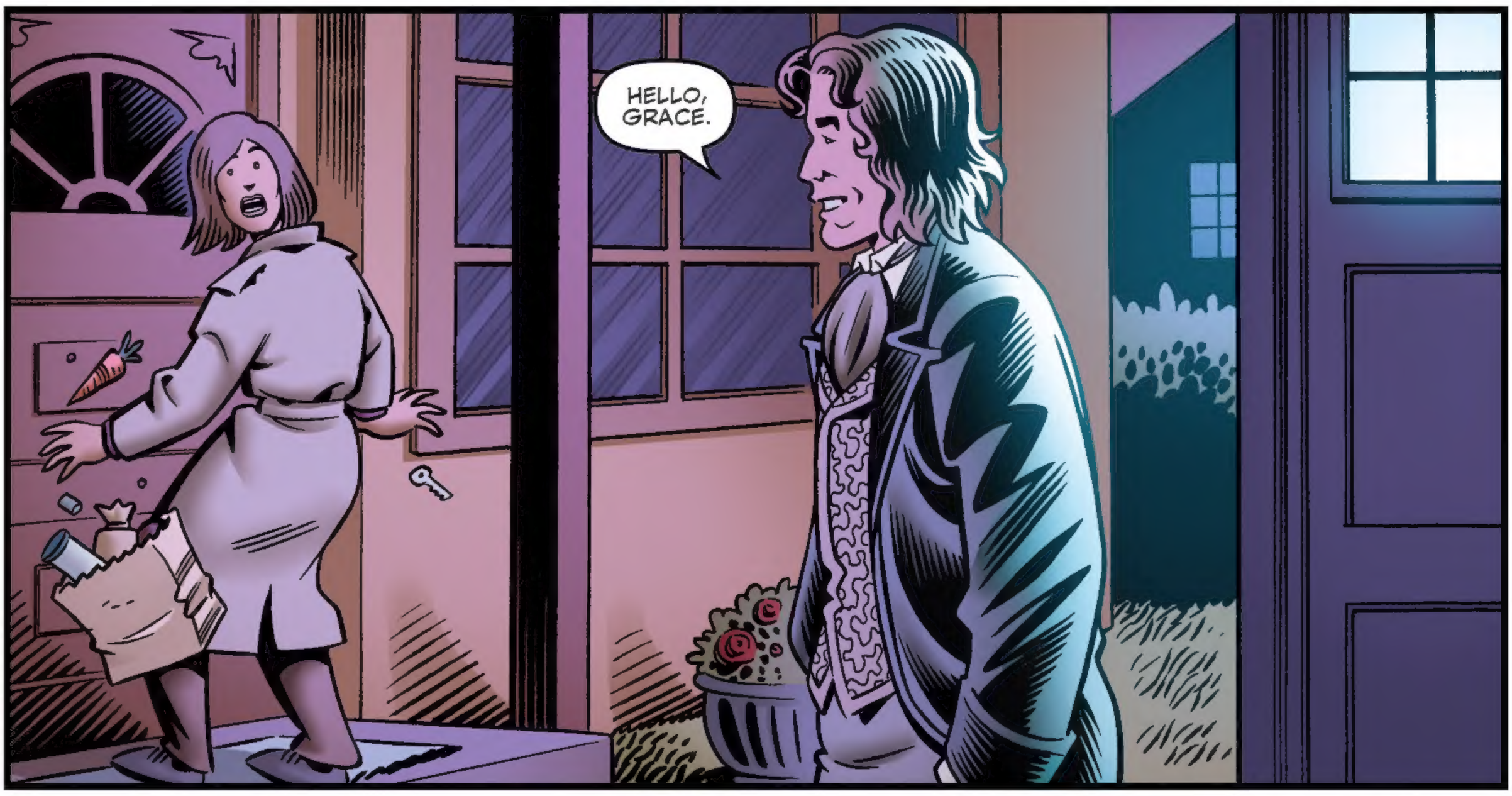

SAN FRANCISCO. FEBRUARY 2000.
HOLD THAT BACK A BIT, LET'S SEE IF I CAN CLEAR AWAY ALL OF THE BLOCKAGE.
I GOT IT.


...SO I SAID TO HIM, WHAT DO YOU MEAN 'IT'S OVER'?!
OUCH. I'VE BEEN THERE.

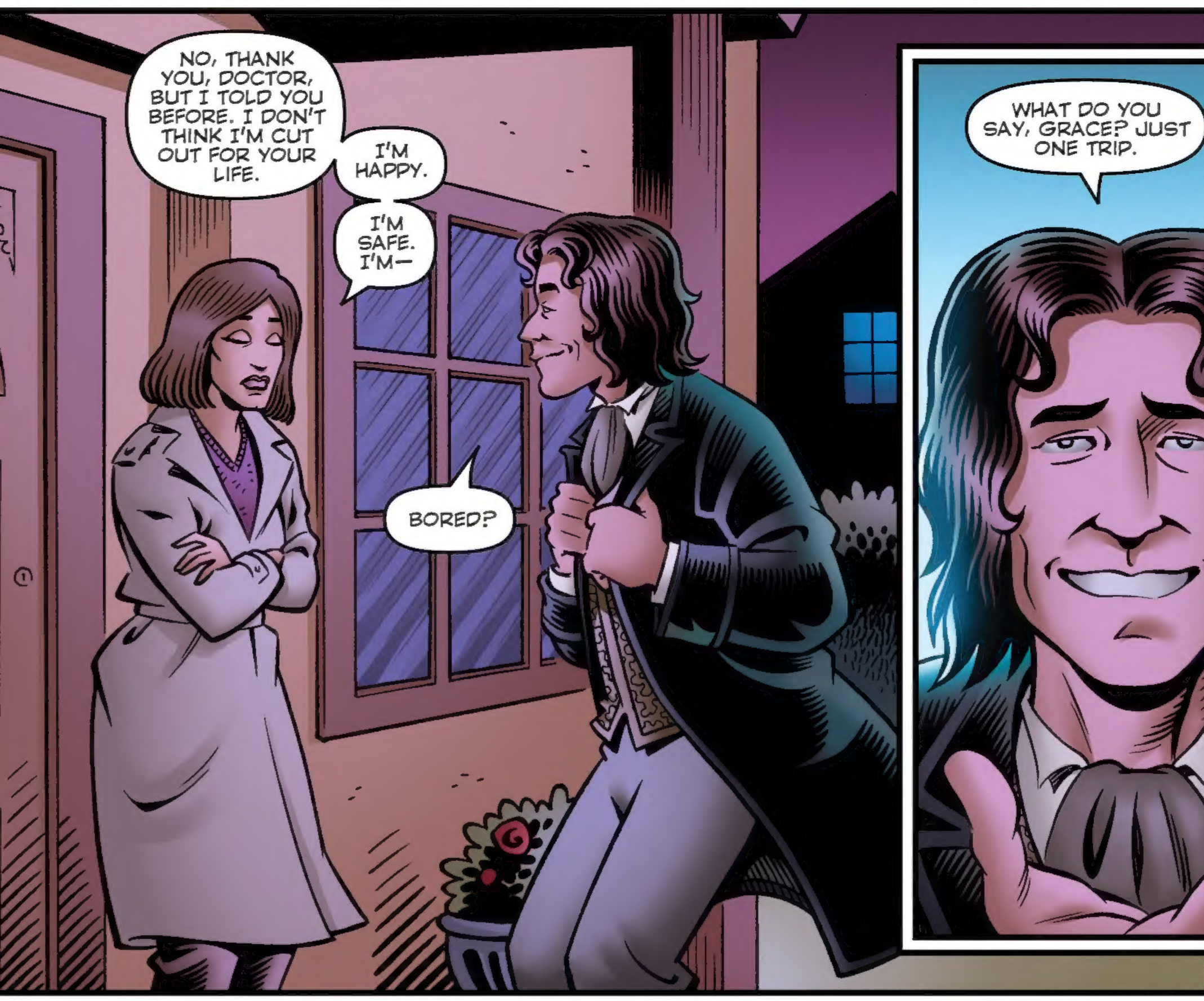

SCIENTISTS AT THE SAN FRANCISCO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT AND RESEARCH HAVE FINALLY MADE PROGRESS IN THEIR REPAIRS TO THEIR MUCH ANTICIPATED ATOMIC CLOCK, WHICH FAMOUSLY FIZZLED ON NEW YEAR'S EVE LAST MONTH.
REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE INSTITUTE SAY THE CLOCK SHOULD BE UP AND RUNNING WITHIN THE WEEK.

COME ON...
VWORP VWORP VWORP VWORP

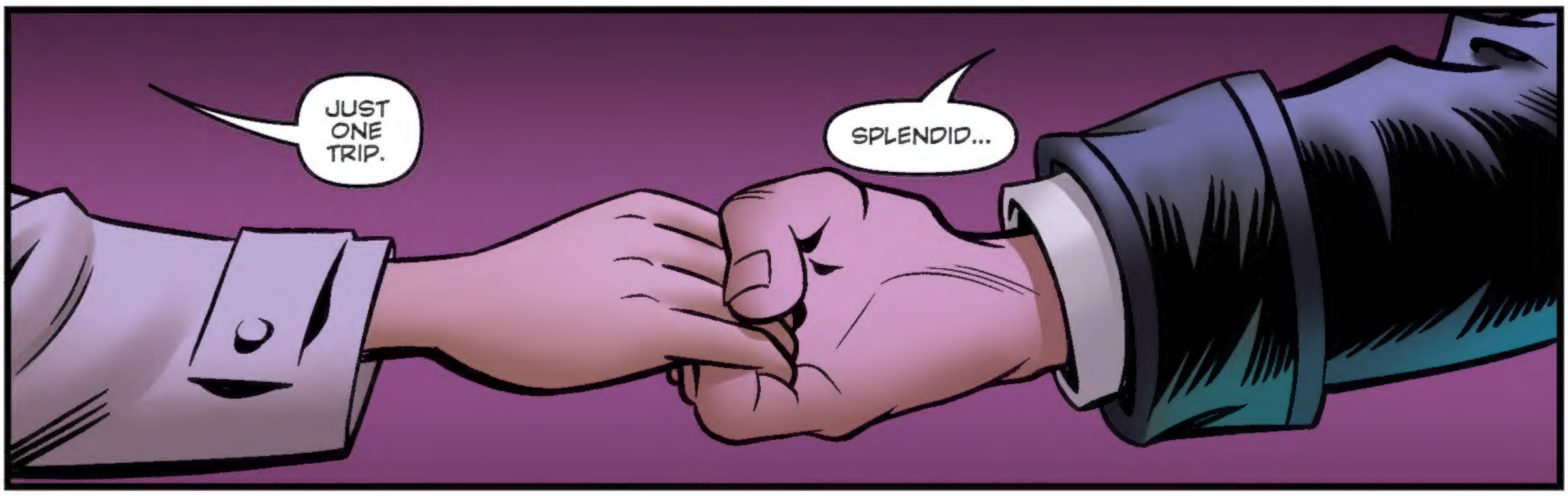

HELLO, GRACE.

DOCTOR! YOU'RE BACK!

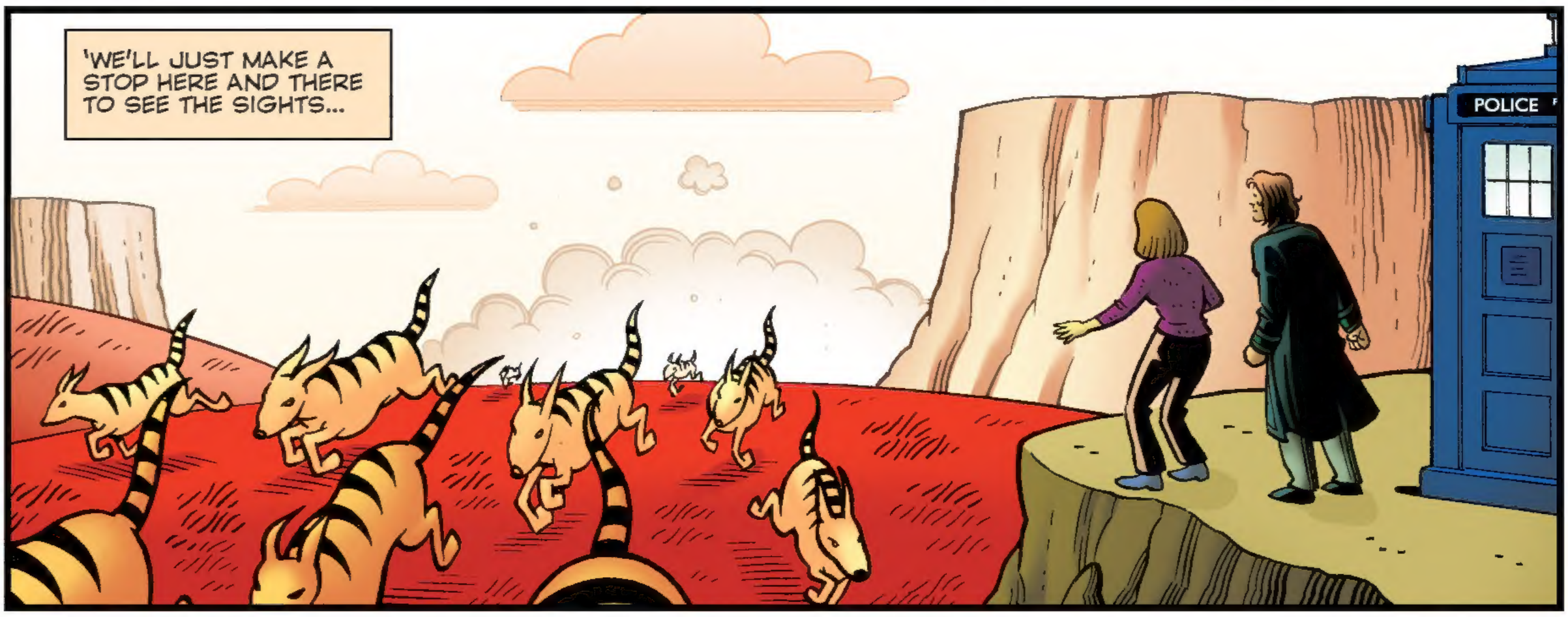
YES, WELL... I WAS PASSING BY, AND... I THOUGHT PERHAPS YOU MIGHT HAVE CHANGED YOUR MIND.
ABOUT COMING WITH ME, THAT IS.


NO, THANK YOU, DOCTOR, BUT I TOLD YOU BEFORE. I DON'T THINK I'M CUT OUT FOR YOUR LIFE.
I'M HAPPY.
I'M SAFE. I'M—
BORED?

WHAT DO YOU SAY, GRACE? JUST ONE TRIP.


JUST ONE TRIP.
SPLENDID...

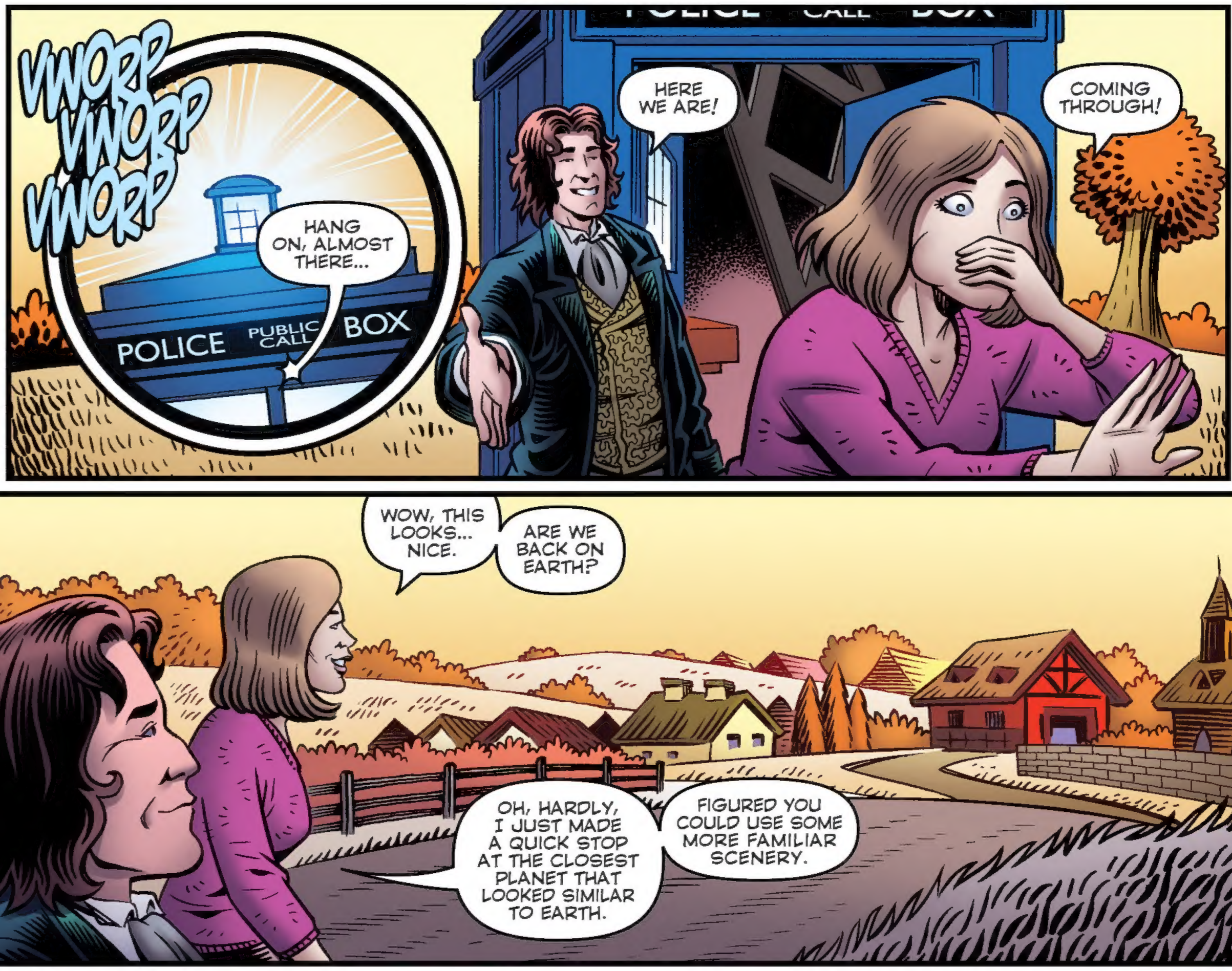
POLICE PUBLIC CALL BOX
'NOT TO WORRY, WE'LL TAKE IT NICE AND SLOW...

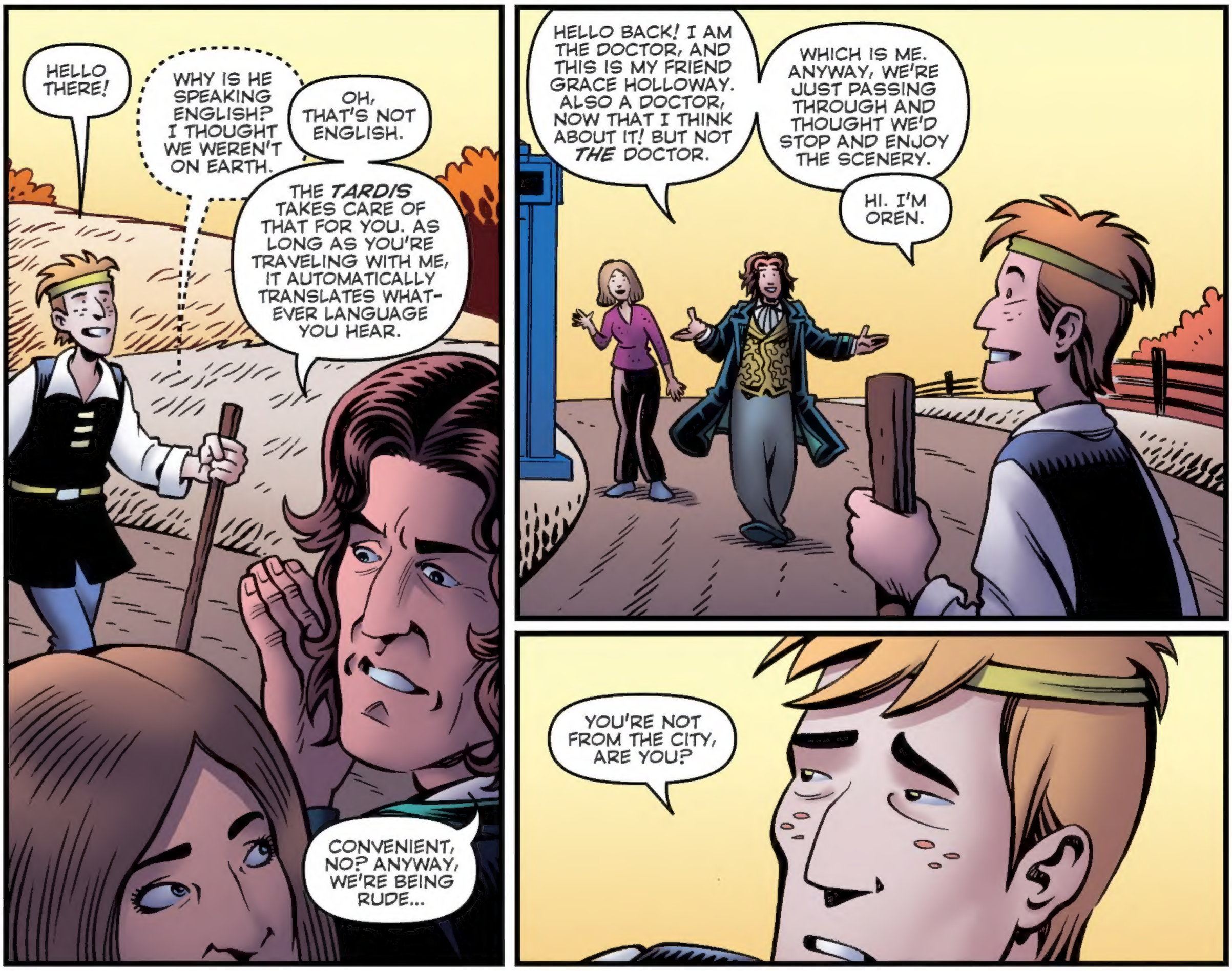

'WE'LL JUST MAKE A STOP HERE AND THERE TO SEE THE SIGHTS...
POLICE

'YOU KNOW, TAKE IN SOME OF THE SCENERY...
POLICE PUBLIC CALL BOX

'BUT NOTHING TOO EXCITING. YOU HAVE MY WORD'.

WELL?
WHAT DO YOU THINK?


VWORP VWORP VWORP
HANG ON, ALMOST THERE...
POLICE PUBLIC CALL BOX
HERE WE ARE!
COMING THROUGH!
WOW, THIS LOOKS... NICE.
ARE WE BACK ON EARTH?
OH, HARDLY, I JUST MADE A QUICK STOP AT THE CLOSEST PLANET THAT LOOKED SIMILAR TO EARTH.
FIGURED YOU COULD USE SOME MORE FAMILIAR SCENERY.


HELLO THERE!
WHY IS HE SPEAKING ENGLISH? I THOUGHT WE WEREN'T ON EARTH.
OH, THAT'S NOT ENGLISH.
THE *TARDIS* TAKES CARE OF THAT FOR YOU. AS LONG AS YOU'RE TRAVELING WITH ME, IT AUTOMATICALLY TRANSLATES WHATEVER LANGUAGE YOU HEAR.
CONVENIENT, NO? ANYWAY, WE'RE BEING RUDE...
HELLO BACK! I AM THE DOCTOR, AND THIS IS MY FRIEND GRACE HOLLOWAY. ALSO A DOCTOR, NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT! BUT NOT *THE* DOCTOR.
WHICH IS ME. ANYWAY, WE'RE JUST PASSING THROUGH AND THOUGHT WE'D STOP AND ENJOY THE SCENERY.
HI. I'M OREN.
YOU'RE NOT FROM THE CITY, ARE YOU?

ERR, NOT EXACTLY— WHAT CITY DO YOU MEAN?

BRENDAIS. WHERE THE OVERSEERS LIVE.

OH, NO, NO. GRACE AND I ARE TRAVELLING FROM MUCH FARTHER AWAY.

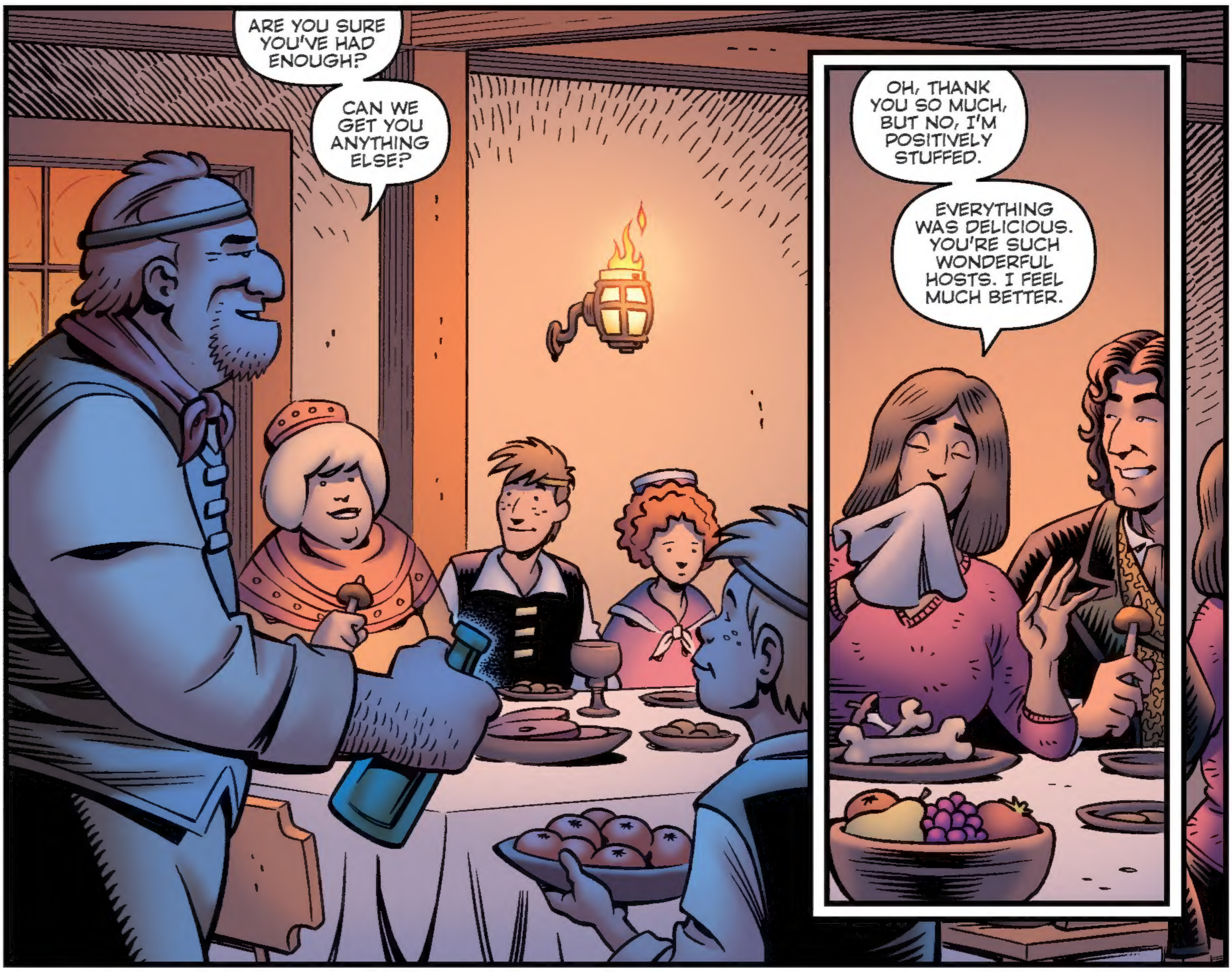
WOW. WE RARELY HAVE VISITORS HERE. NO ONE EVER GETS TO TRAVEL, EITHER.

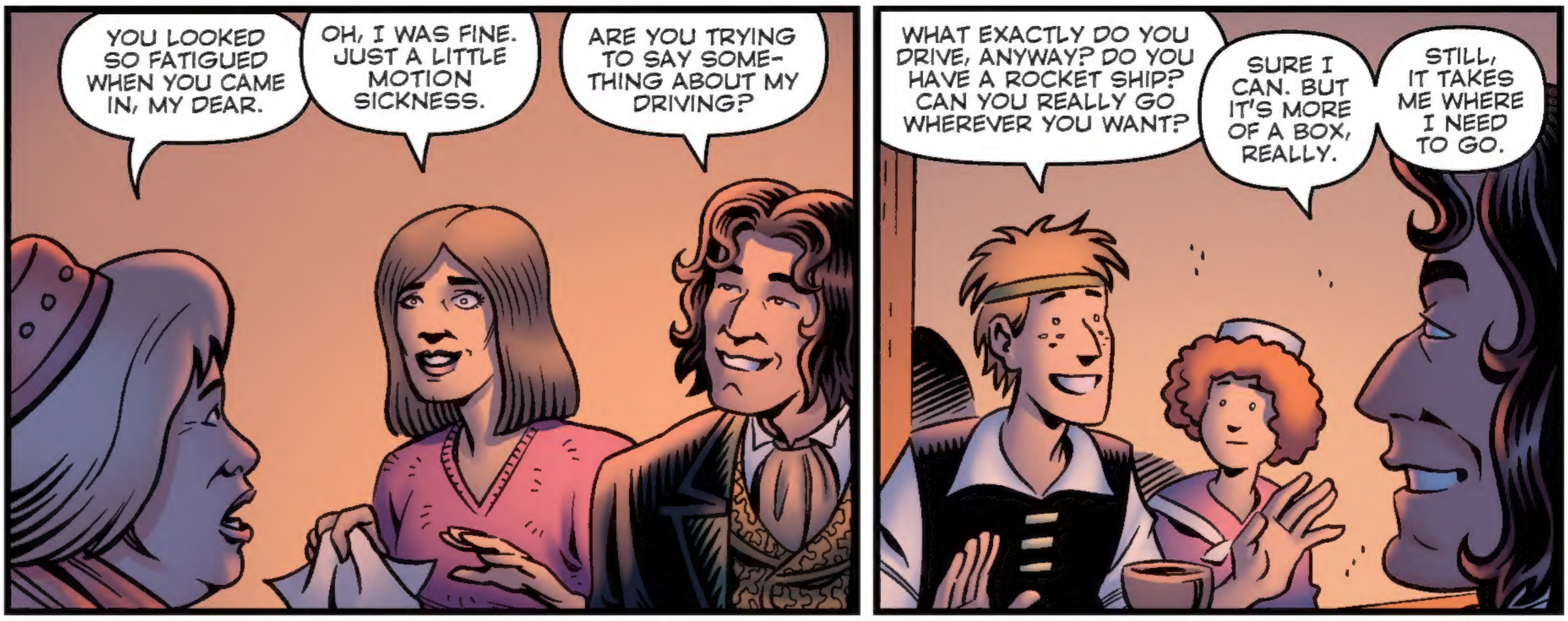
I DON'T WANT TO PRY, BUT PERHAPS YOU COULD TELL ME MORE...

BUT IT LOOKS LIKE YOU HAVE HAD A LONG JOURNEY. COME, LET'S GO TO MY FAMILY'S HOME.

WE'LL HAVE A MEAL AND YOU CAN GET A LITTLE REST.

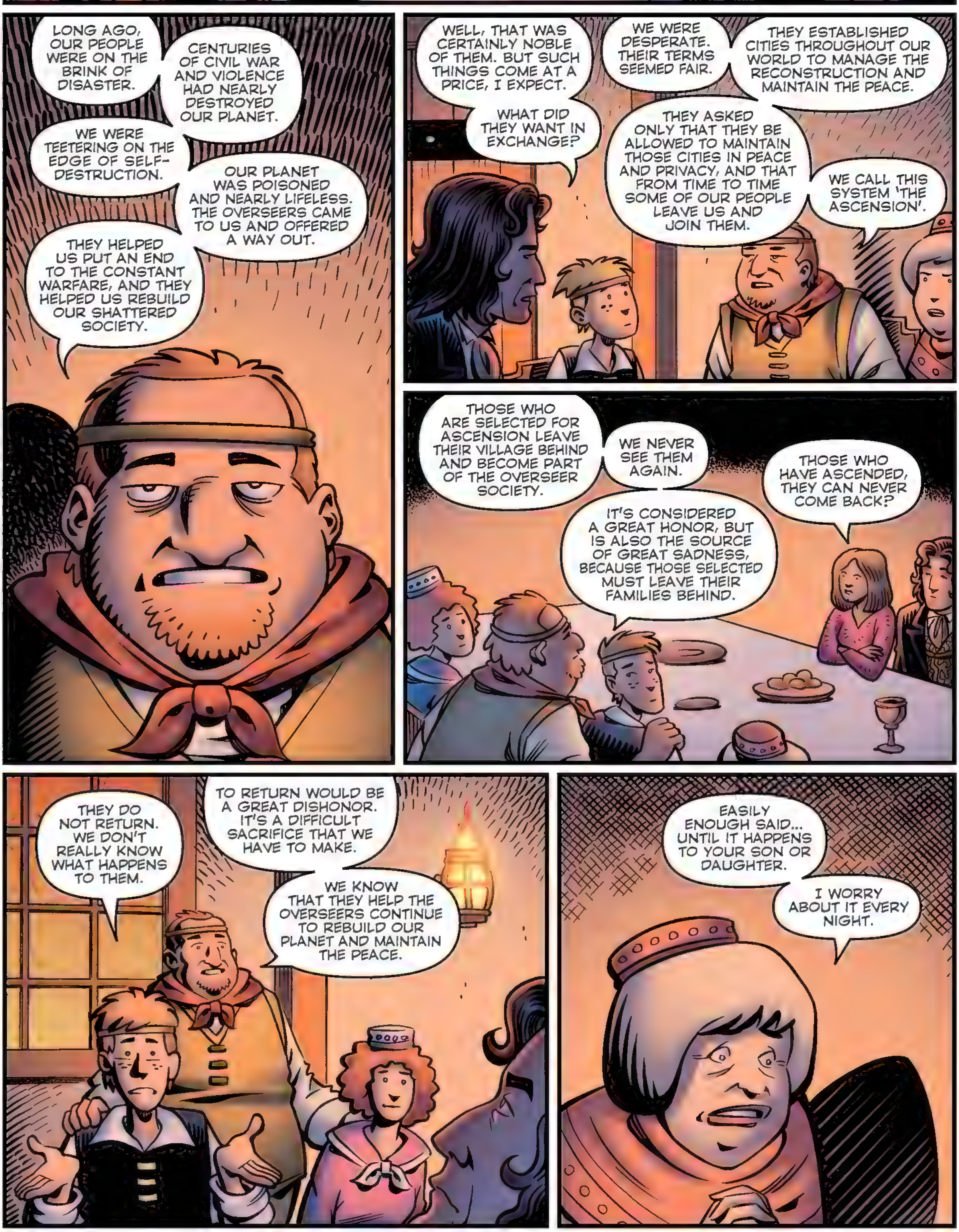
THAT SOUNDS LIKE A GREAT IDEA.

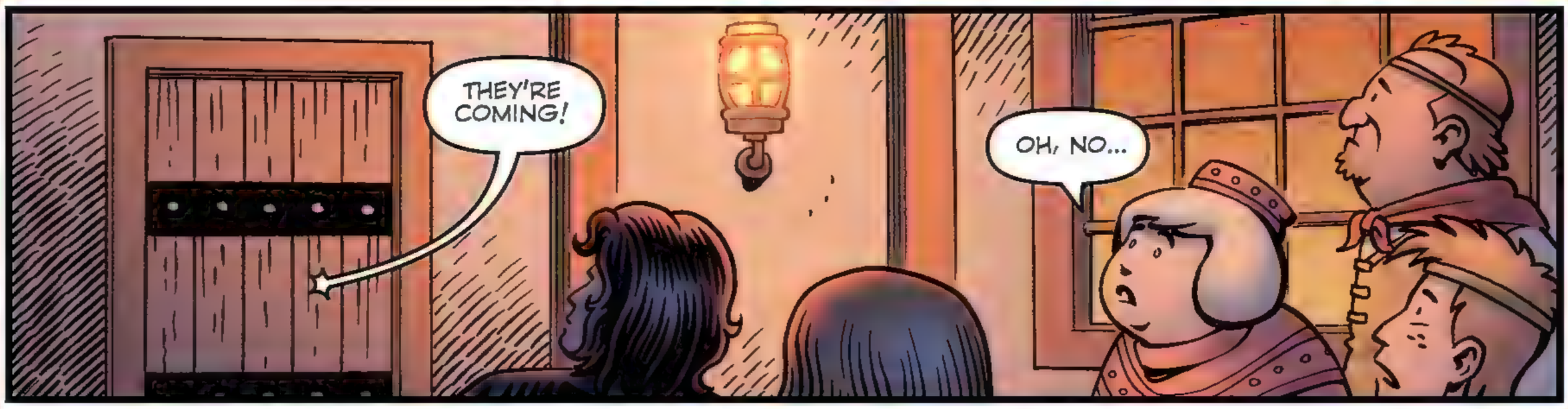

ARE YOU SURE YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH?
CAN WE GET YOU ANYTHING ELSE?
OH, THANK YOU SO MUCH, BUT NO, I'M POSITIVELY STUFFED.
EVERYTHING WAS DELICIOUS. YOU'RE SUCH WONDERFUL HOSTS. I FEEL MUCH BETTER.

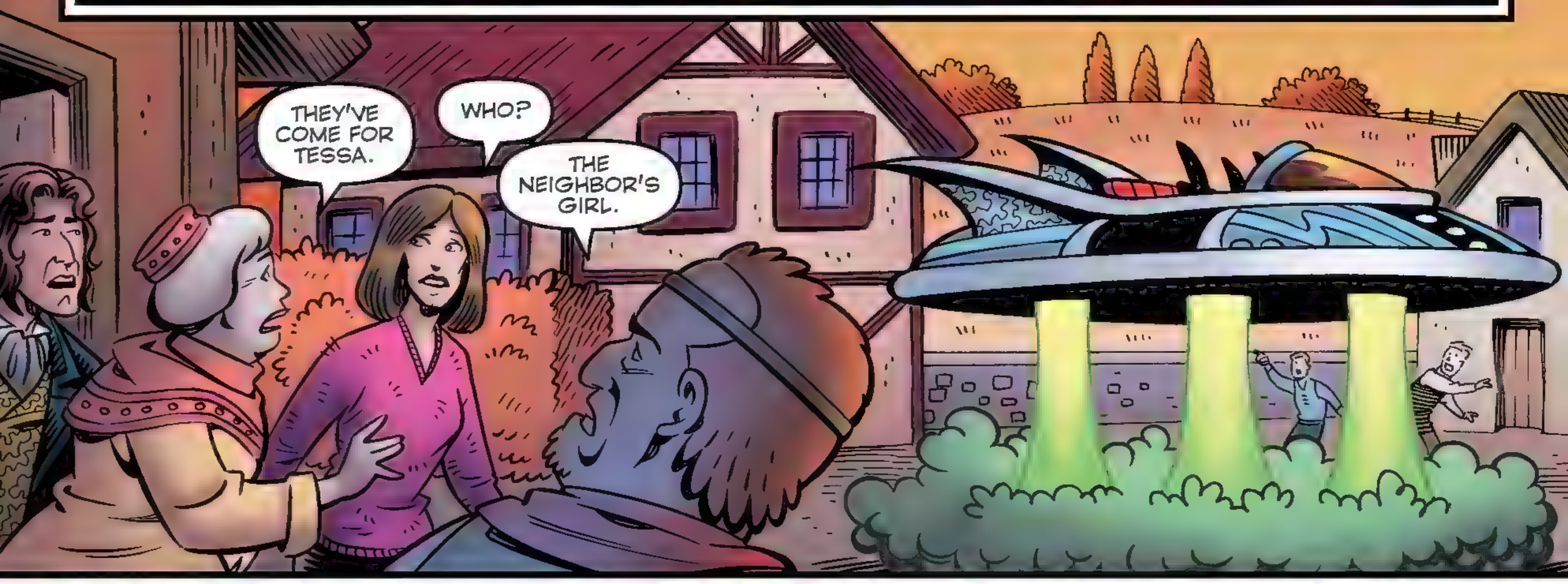

YOU LOOKED SO FATIGUED WHEN YOU CAME IN, MY DEAR.
OH, I WAS FINE. JUST A LITTLE MOTION SICKNESS.
ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY SOME-THING ABOUT MY DRIVING?
WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU DRIVE, ANYWAY? DO YOU HAVE A ROCKET SHIP? CAN YOU REALLY GO WHEREVER YOU WANT?
SURE I CAN. BUT IT'S MORE OF A BOX, REALLY.
STILL, IT TAKES ME WHERE I NEED TO GO.

BUT ENOUGH ABOUT ME. TELL US MORE ABOUT YOU.
WHO ARE THESE OVERSEERS YOU MENTIONED?
THE OVERSEERS PROTECT AND PROVIDE FOR OUR VILLAGE.
THEY MAINTAIN OUR FOOD AND WATER SUPPLY AND KEEP US SAFE.

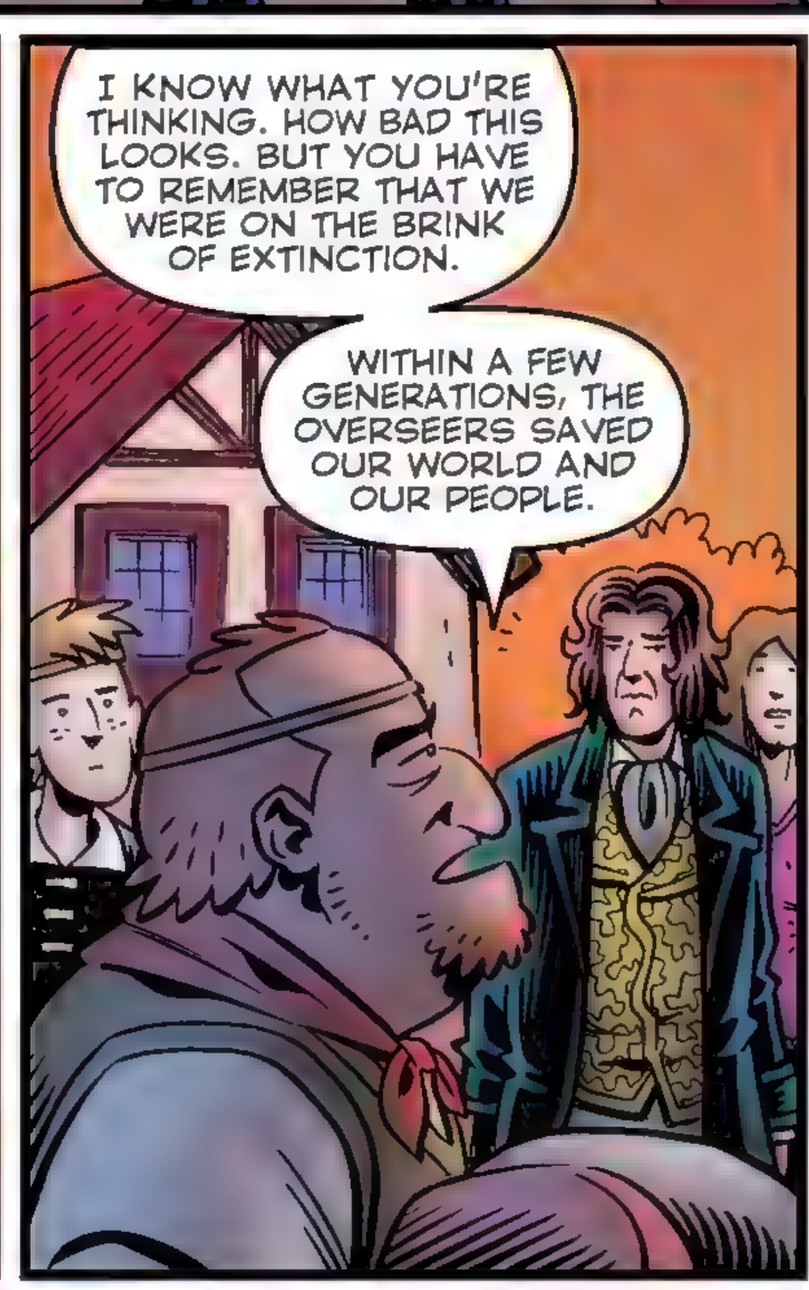
OH REALLY? AND HOW LONG HAVE THEY DONE THAT?
HONESTLY, I DON'T RIGHTLY KNOW FOR SURE. GENERATIONS, AT LEAST.
THAT'S WHAT THEY TEACH US IN SCHOOL, ANYWAY.
'OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE OVER-SEERS HAS LASTED FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS'.


LONG AGO, OUR PEOPLE WERE ON THE BRINK OF DISASTER.
CENTURIES OF CIVIL WAR AND VIOLENCE HAD NEARLY DESTROYED OUR PLANET.
WE WERE TEETERING ON THE EDGE OF SELF-DESTRUCTION.
OUR PLANET WAS POISONED AND NEARLY LIFELESS. THE OVERSEERS CAME TO US AND OFFERED A WAY OUT.
THEY HELPED US PUT AN END TO THE CONSTANT WARFARE, AND THEY HELPED US REBUILD OUR SHATTERED SOCIETY.
WELL, THAT WAS CERTAINLY NOBLE OF THEM. BUT SUCH THINGS COME AT A PRICE, I EXPECT.
WE WERE DESPERATE. THEIR TERMS SEEMED FAIR.
THEY ESTABLISHED CITIES THROUGHOUT OUR WORLD TO MANAGE THE RECONSTRUCTION AND MAINTAIN THE PEACE.
WHAT DID THEY WANT IN EXCHANGE?
THEY ASKED ONLY THAT THEY BE ALLOWED TO MAINTAIN THOSE CITIES IN PEACE AND PRIVACY, AND THAT FROM TIME TO TIME SOME OF OUR PEOPLE LEAVE US AND JOIN THEM.
WE CALL THIS SYSTEM 'THE ASCENSION'.
THOSE WHO ARE SELECTED FOR ASCENSION LEAVE THEIR VILLAGE BEHIND AND BECOME PART OF THE OVERSEER SOCIETY.
WE NEVER SEE THEM AGAIN.
THOSE WHO HAVE ASCENDED, THEY CAN NEVER COME BACK?
IT'S CONSIDERED A GREAT HONOR, BUT IS ALSO THE SOURCE OF GREAT SADNESS, BECAUSE THOSE SELECTED MUST LEAVE THEIR FAMILIES BEHIND.
THEY DO NOT RETURN. WE DON'T REALLY KNOW WHAT HAPPENS TO THEM.
TO RETURN WOULD BE A GREAT DISHONOR. IT'S A DIFFICULT SACRIFICE THAT WE HAVE TO MAKE.
WE KNOW THAT THEY HELP THE OVERSEERS CONTINUE TO REBUILD OUR PLANET AND MAINTAIN THE PEACE.
EASILY ENOUGH SAID... UNTIL IT HAPPENS TO YOUR SON OR DAUGHTER.
I WORRY ABOUT IT EVERY NIGHT.


THEY'RE COMING!
OH, NO...

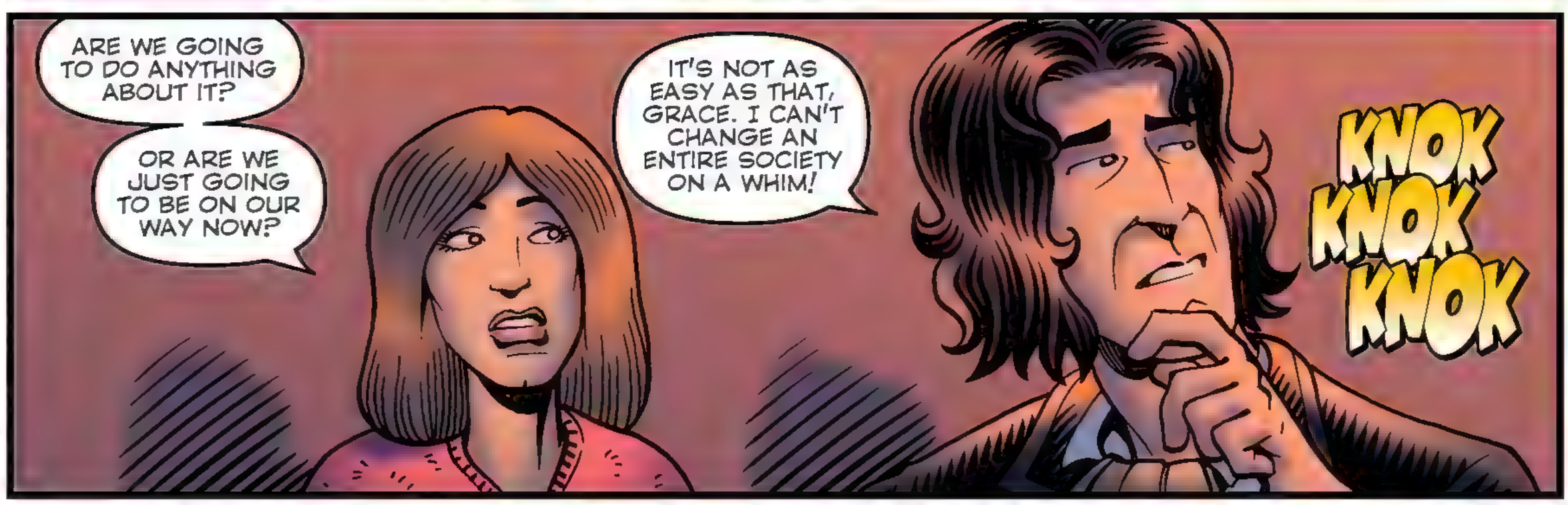

THEY'VE COME FOR TESSA.
WHO?
THE NEIGHBOR'S GIRL.

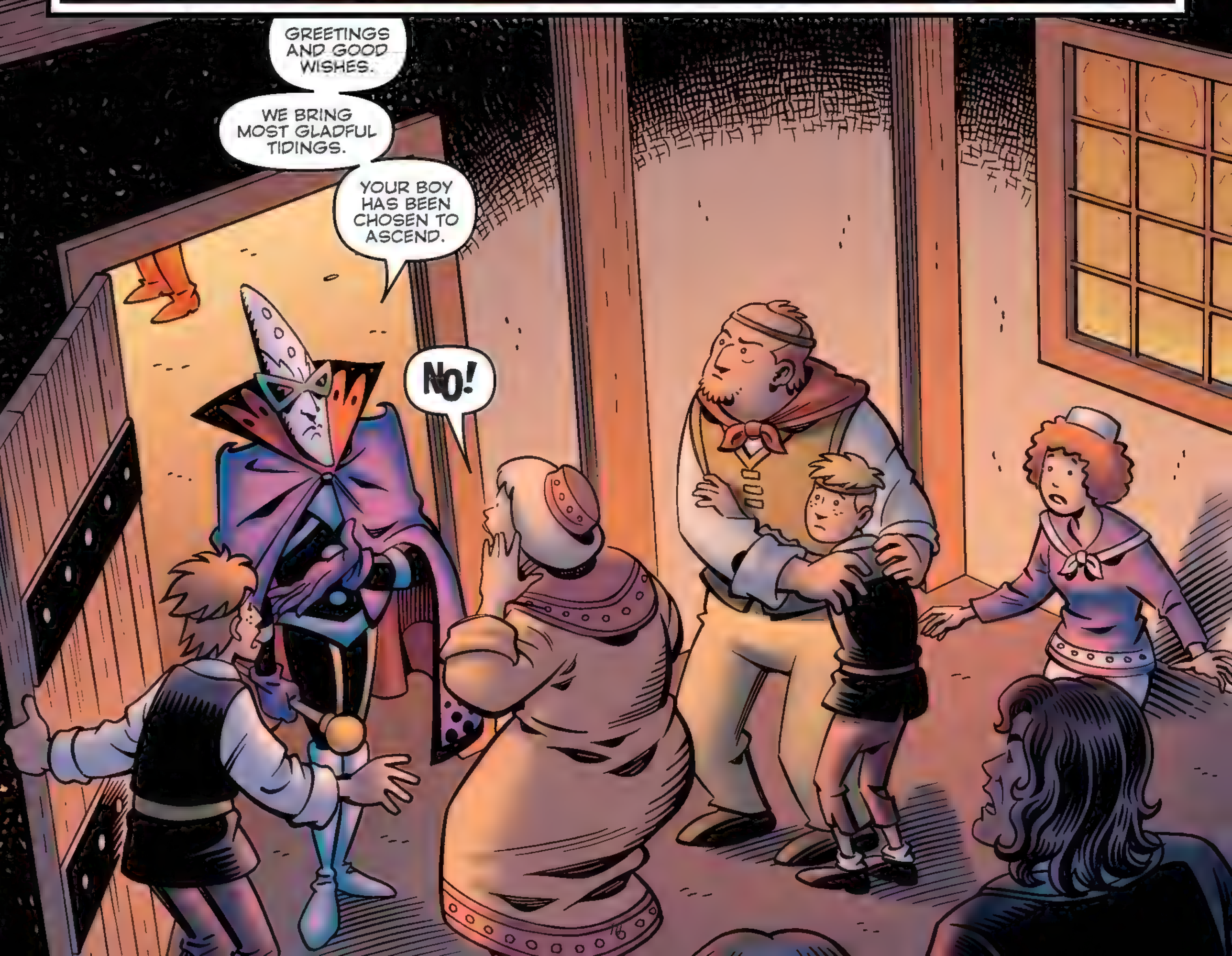
THIS IS HORRIBLE. SOMETHING DOESN'T SEEM RIGHT ABOUT THIS.


I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING. HOW BAD THIS LOOKS. BUT YOU HAVE TO REMEMBER THAT WE WERE ON THE BRINK OF EXTINCTION.
WITHIN A FEW GENERATIONS, THE OVERSEERS SAVED OUR WORLD AND OUR PEOPLE.

I UNDERSTAND. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO TESSA?
YOU MUST HAVE SOME IDEA.
I JUST DON'T KNOW. THIS IS THE PRICE WE HAVE PAID.

THIS IS YOUR 'JUST ONE TRIP'? YOU TAKE ME SOMEPLACE WITH AN EXCRUCIATING MORAL DILEMMA?
NOT EVERY PLACE I GO IS AS PLEASANT AS SAN FRANCISCO, GRACE.
SOMETIMES THE TARDIS HAS A WAY OF BRINGING ME TO PLACES WHERE IT THINKS I SHOULD GO.
NOW YOU TELL ME.


ARE WE GOING TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT?
OR ARE WE JUST GOING TO BE ON OUR WAY NOW?
IT'S NOT AS EASY AS THAT, GRACE. I CAN'T CHANGE AN ENTIRE SOCIETY ON A WHIM!
KNOK KNOK KNOK


GREETINGS AND GOOD WISHES.
WE BRING MOST GLADFUL TIDINGS.
YOUR BOY HAS BEEN CHOSEN TO ASCEND.
No!

IS THIS THE FAMILY'S STANCE, FATHER?

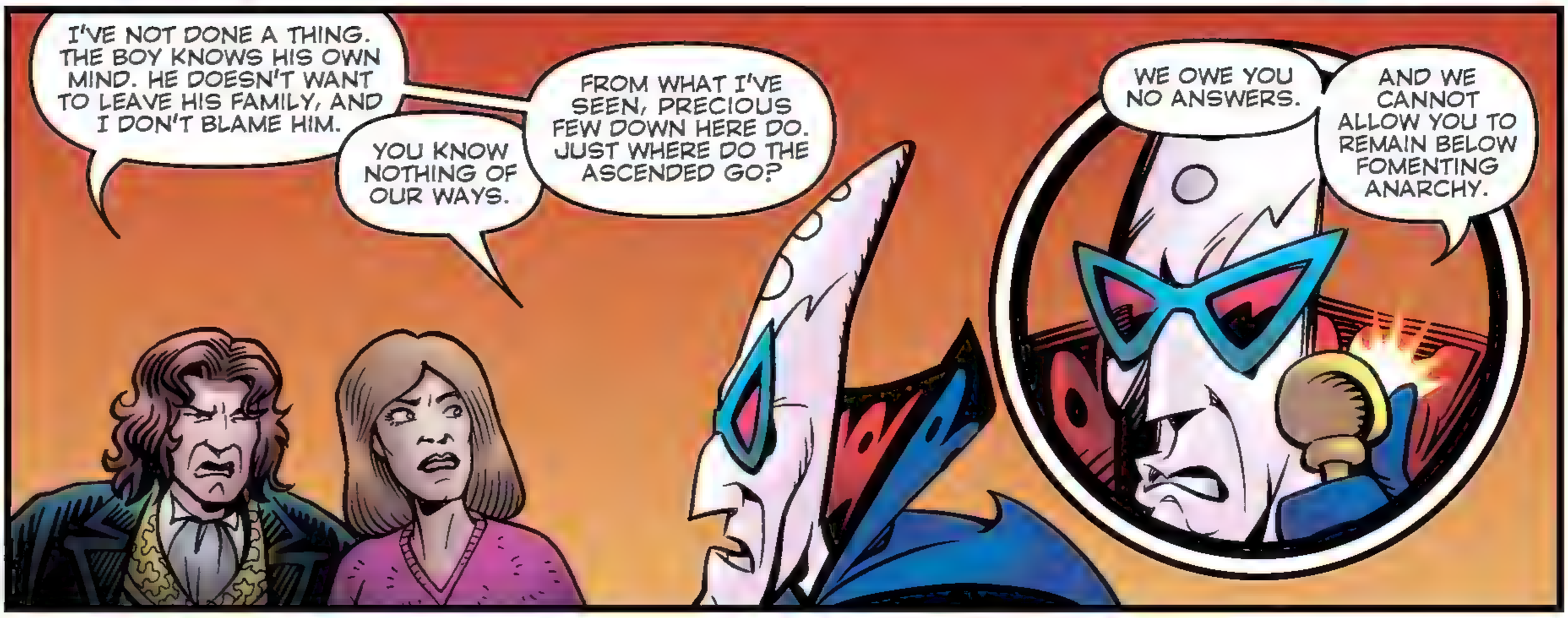
...NO. HE MUST ASCEND.

YOU SERVE YOUR FAMILY AND YOUR PEOPLE WELL WITH YOUR WISDOM, FATHER.

NO!

NO!

WHO ARE YOU? YOU ARE NOT ONE OF THE LOWGROUNDERS. YOU ARE AN OUTSIDER. DID YOU POISON THE BOY'S MIND AGAINST OUR TRADITIONS?

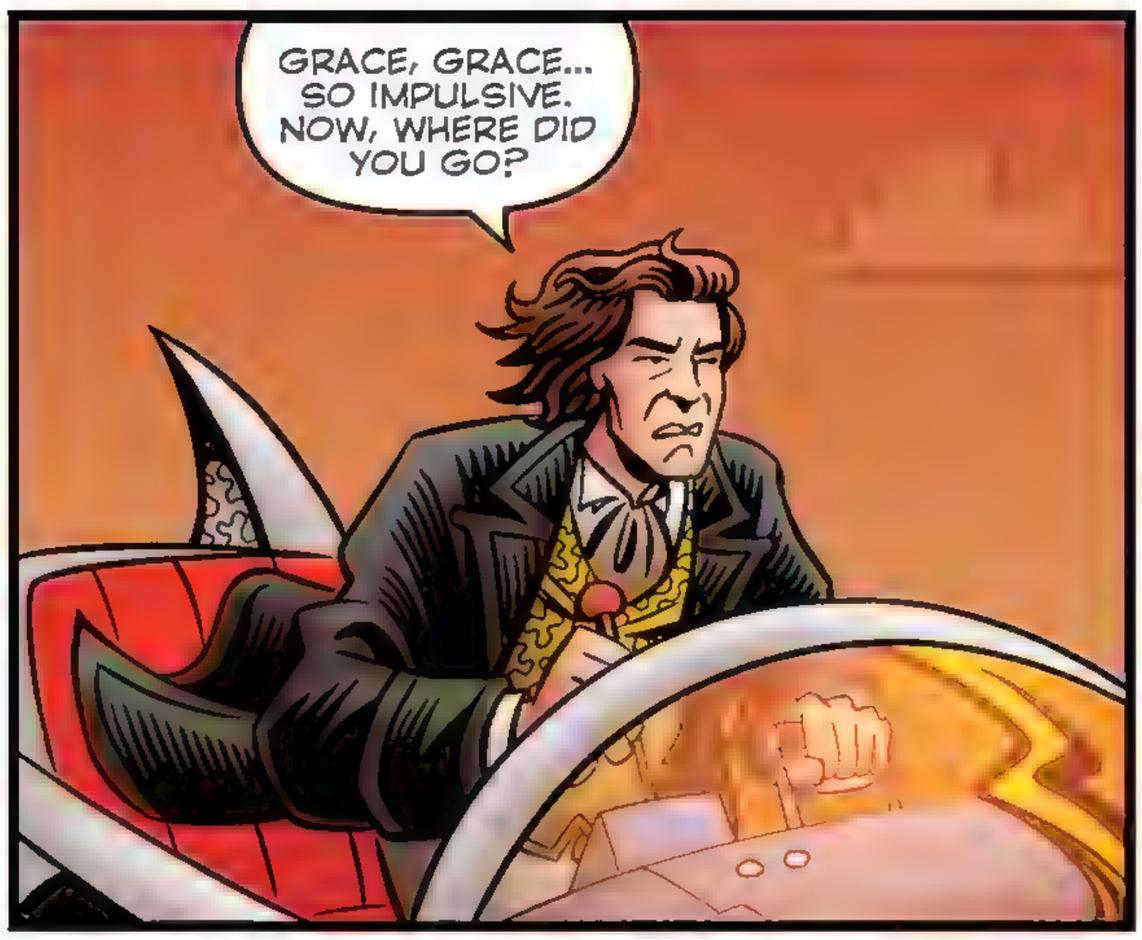

I'VE NOT DONE A THING. THE BOY KNOWS HIS OWN MIND. HE DOESN'T WANT TO LEAVE HIS FAMILY, AND I DON'T BLAME HIM.
YOU KNOW NOTHING OF OUR WAYS.
FROM WHAT I'VE SEEN, PRECIOUS FEW DOWN HERE DO. JUST WHERE DO THE ASCENDED GO?
WE OWE YOU NO ANSWERS.
AND WE CANNOT ALLOW YOU TO REMAIN BELOW FOMENTING ANARCHY.

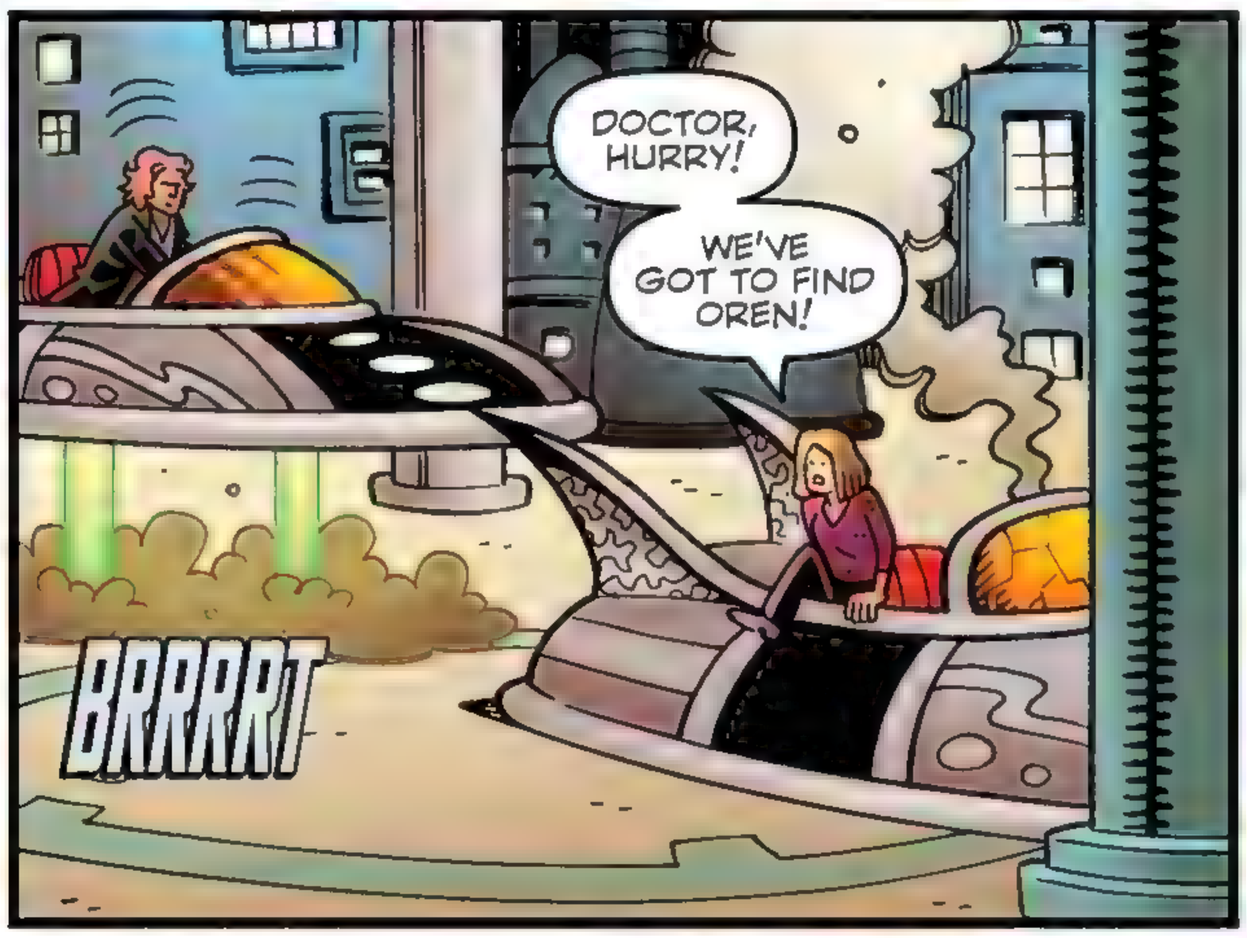
EITHER RETURN WHENCE YOU CAME OR YOU TOO SHALL BE ASCENDED, ALTHOUGH YOU DO NOT DESERVE SUCH AN HONOR.
OH, I DON'T KNOW. IT'S LOVELY DOWN HERE.
WE MIGHT FEEL LIKE STAYING THE SUMMER.

I WON'T LET THEM TAKE THE BOY!
GRACE, NO!

DON'T MIND IF I BORROW THIS, DO YOU? THANKS SO MUCH.

COME BACK HERE!

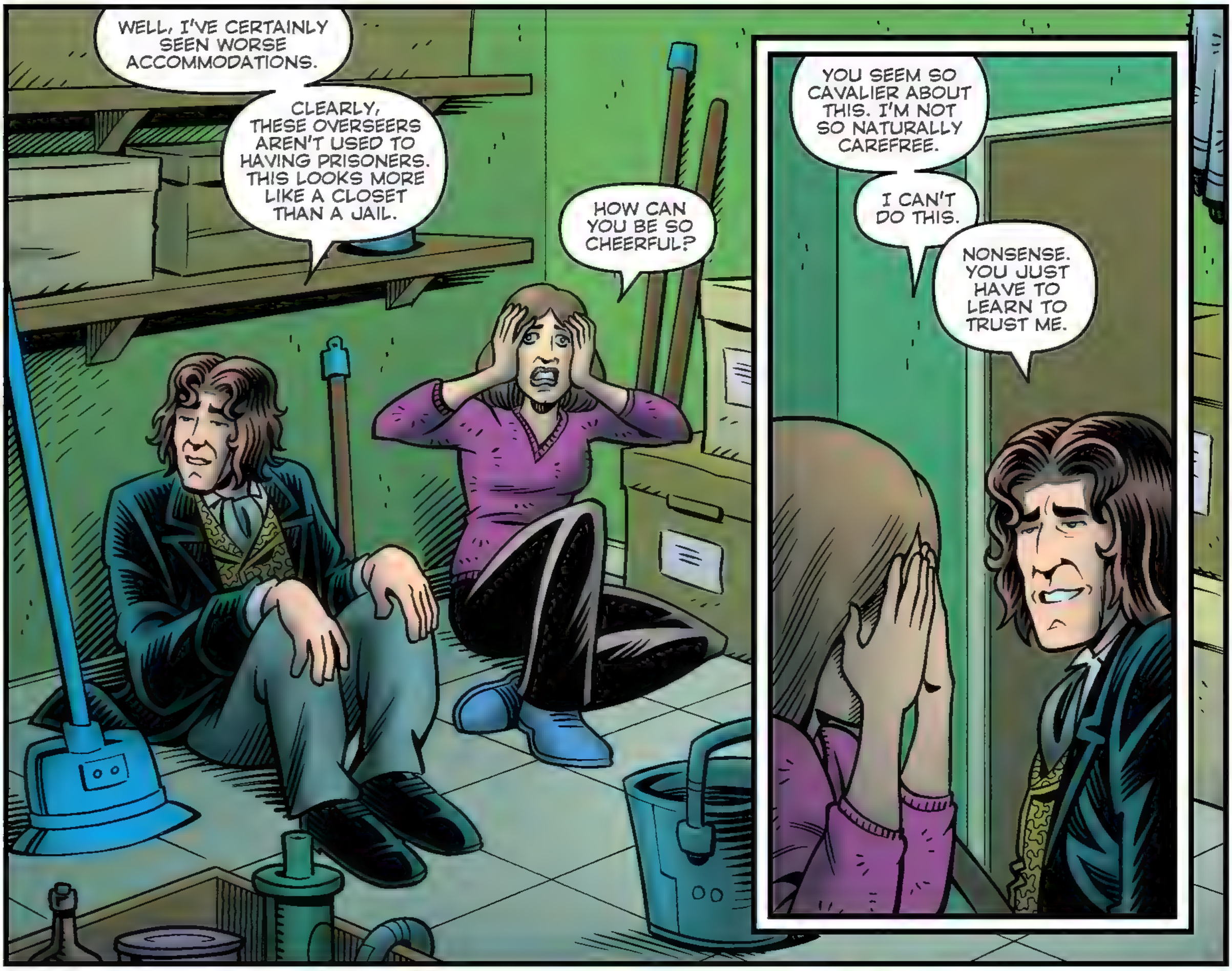




LIKE THIS?

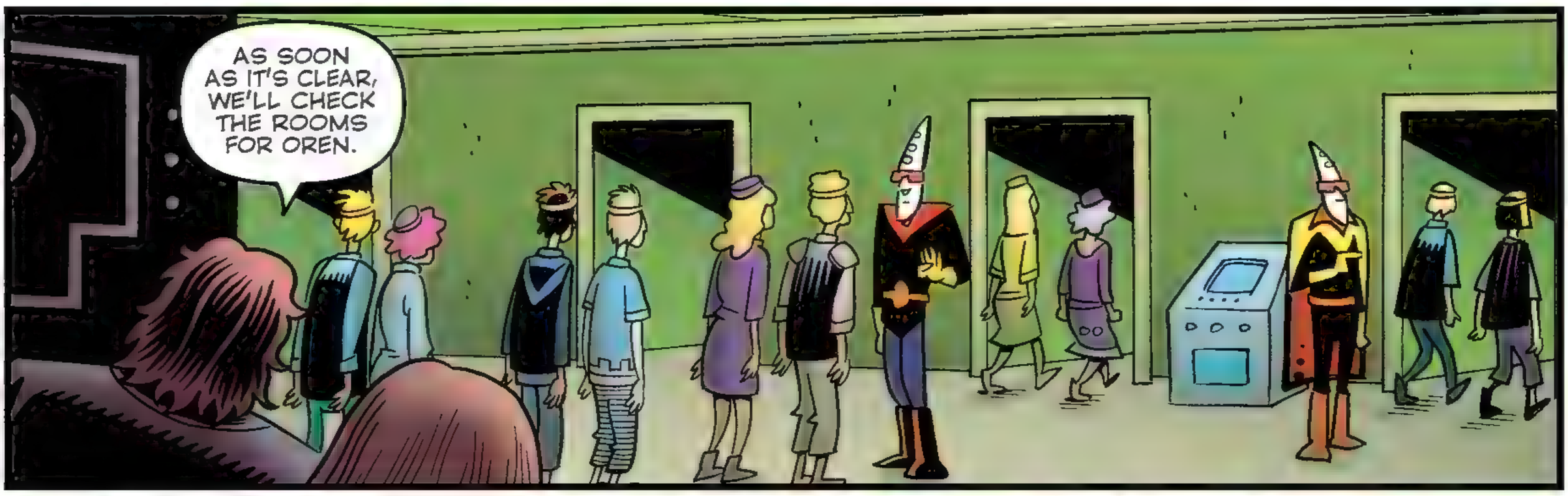
NOT AS A RULE, BUT IT'S A FAIR EXAMPLE, YES.

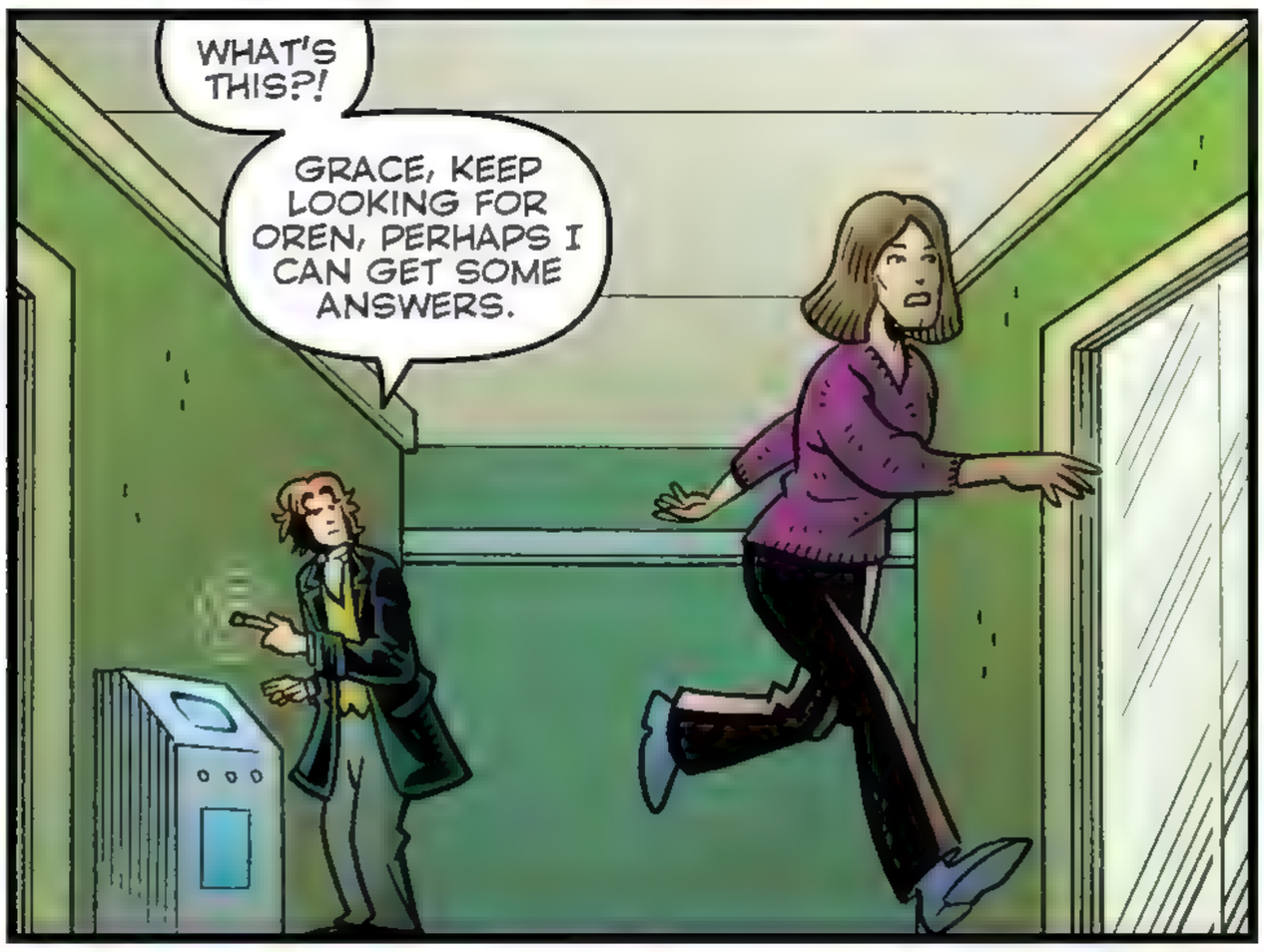
YOU DARE INTERFERE WITH THE ASCENSION?
NOT ONLY THAT, MAGISTRATE, BUT THEY HAVE BEEN DISRUPTING THE PEACE AND CORRUPTING THE MINDS OF THE YOUTH.
NOT TO MENTION THEFT AND DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY!
YOU'D KNOW ALL ABOUT DISRUPTION AND CORRUPTION, WOULDN'T YOU?
WHAT EXACTLY HAPPENS TO THE PEOPLE WHO ARE ASCENDED?
WHY WILL NO ONE ANSWER A SIMPLE QUESTION?
WHO ARE YOU TO ASK SUCH QUESTIONS?
WE SAVED THIS PLANET AND ITS PEOPLE.
YES. WHAT'S THE PRICE?
I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOU WASTING OUR TIME.
CONFINE THEM SOMEWHERE UNTIL SUCH TIME AS WE CAN PREPARE FOR THEIR EXECUTION.
WHAT?!
EXECUTION WITHOUT BENEFIT OF TRIAL, EH?
NOTHING CORRUPT ABOUT THAT AT ALL, IS THERE?


WELL, I'VE CERTAINLY SEEN WORSE ACCOMMODATIONS.
CLEARLY, THESE OVERSEERS AREN'T USED TO HAVING PRISONERS. THIS LOOKS MORE LIKE A CLOSET THAN A JAIL.
HOW CAN YOU BE SO CHEERFUL?
YOU SEEM SO CAVALIER ABOUT THIS. I'M NOT SO NATURALLY CAREFREE.
I CAN'T DO THIS.
NONSENSE. YOU JUST HAVE TO LEARN TO TRUST ME.

GRACE. LOOK AT ME.
YOU DIDN'T REALLY THINK I WAS GOING TO LET THEM GET AWAY WITH IT, DID YOU?
I THINK IT'S TIME WE WERE ON OUR WAY, YES?
BRRRRRT
KLAK

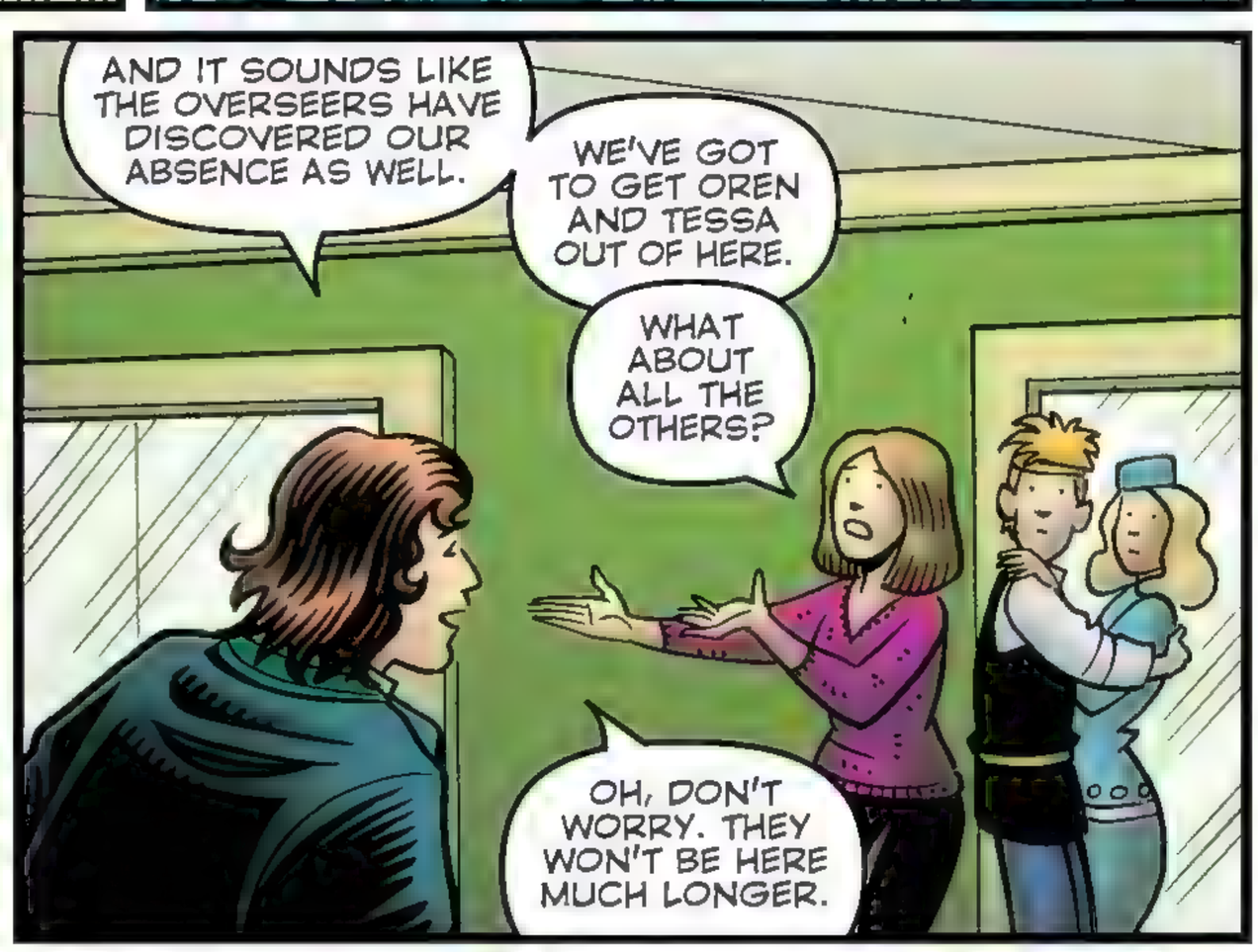
THERE THEY ARE. QUIETLY, NOW.


AS SOON AS IT'S CLEAR, WE'LL CHECK THE ROOMS FOR OREN.

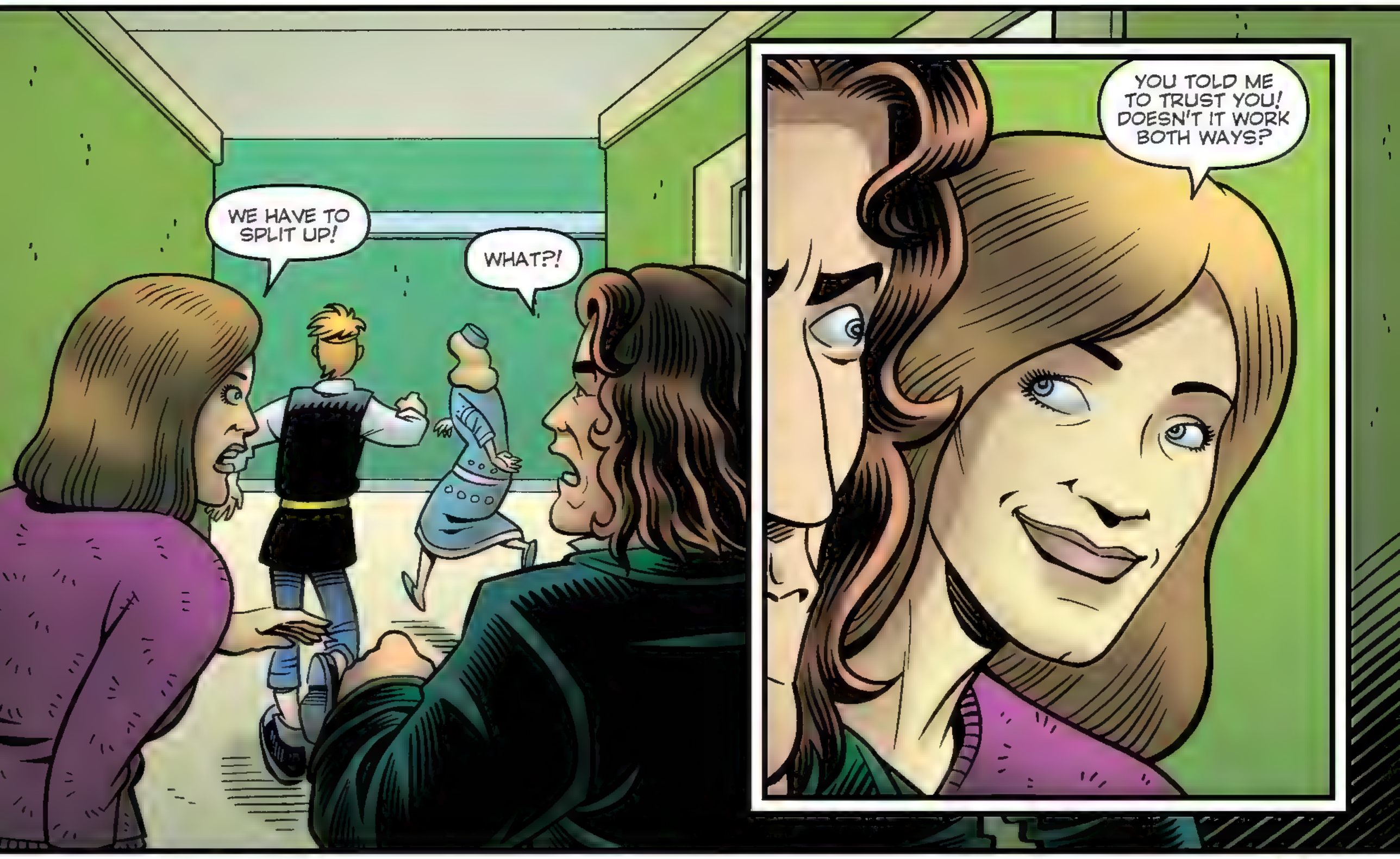

WHAT'S THIS?!
GRACE, KEEP LOOKING FOR OREN, PERHAPS I CAN GET SOME ANSWERS.

NO. IT CAN'T BE...

WEEOOOWEEOOOWEEOOOWEEOOOWEEOOO
DOCTOR! I FOUND THEM BOTH!

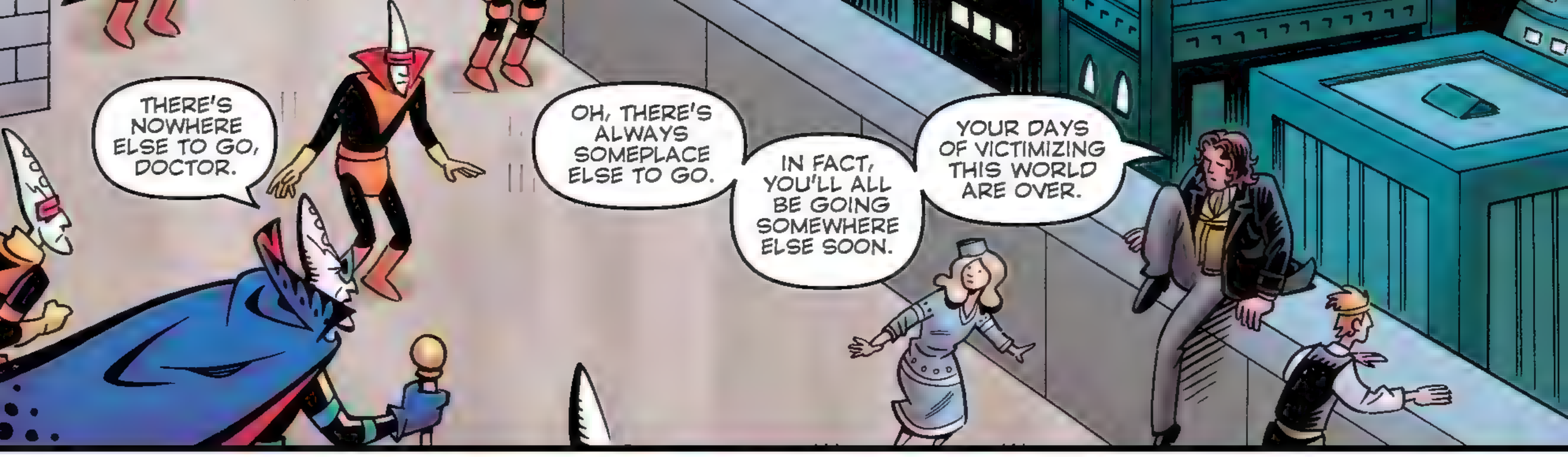

AND IT SOUNDS LIKE THE OVERSEERS HAVE DISCOVERED OUR ABSENCE AS WELL.
WE'VE GOT TO GET OREN AND TESSA OUT OF HERE.
WHAT ABOUT ALL THE OTHERS?
OH, DON'T WORRY. THEY WON'T BE HERE MUCH LONGER.

RUN!


WE HAVE TO SPLIT UP!
WHAT?!
YOU TOLD ME TO TRUST YOU! DOESN'T IT WORK BOTH WAYS?

COME ON, KIDS! IT'S TIME TO SPLIT UP!

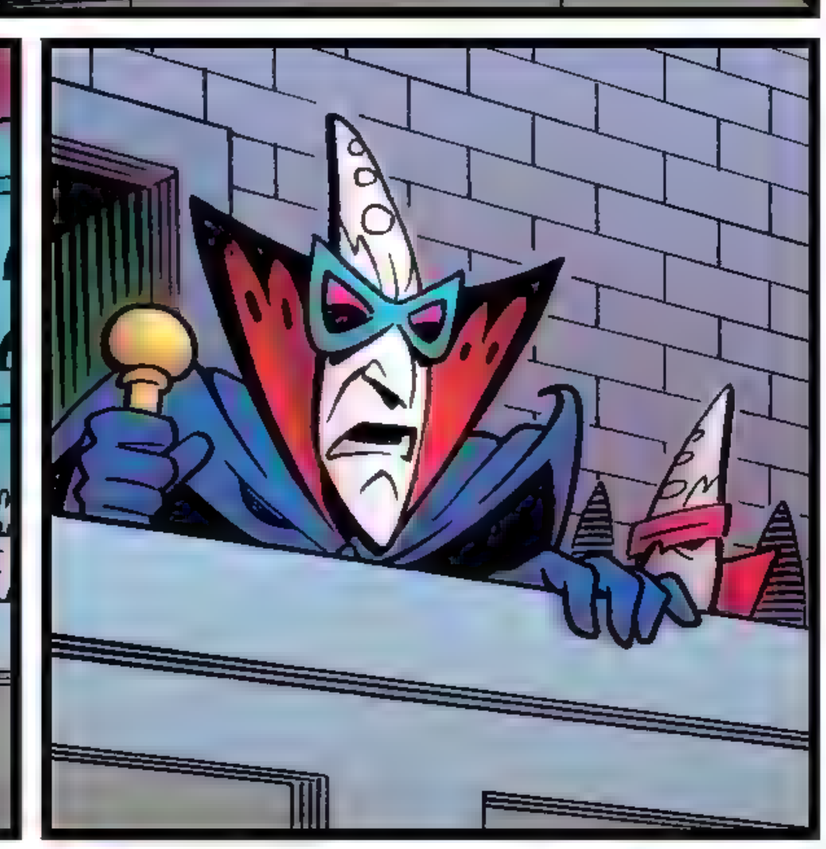
WHERE ARE WE GOING?
WE'RE GOING UP.
DO TRY TO PAY ATTENTION!

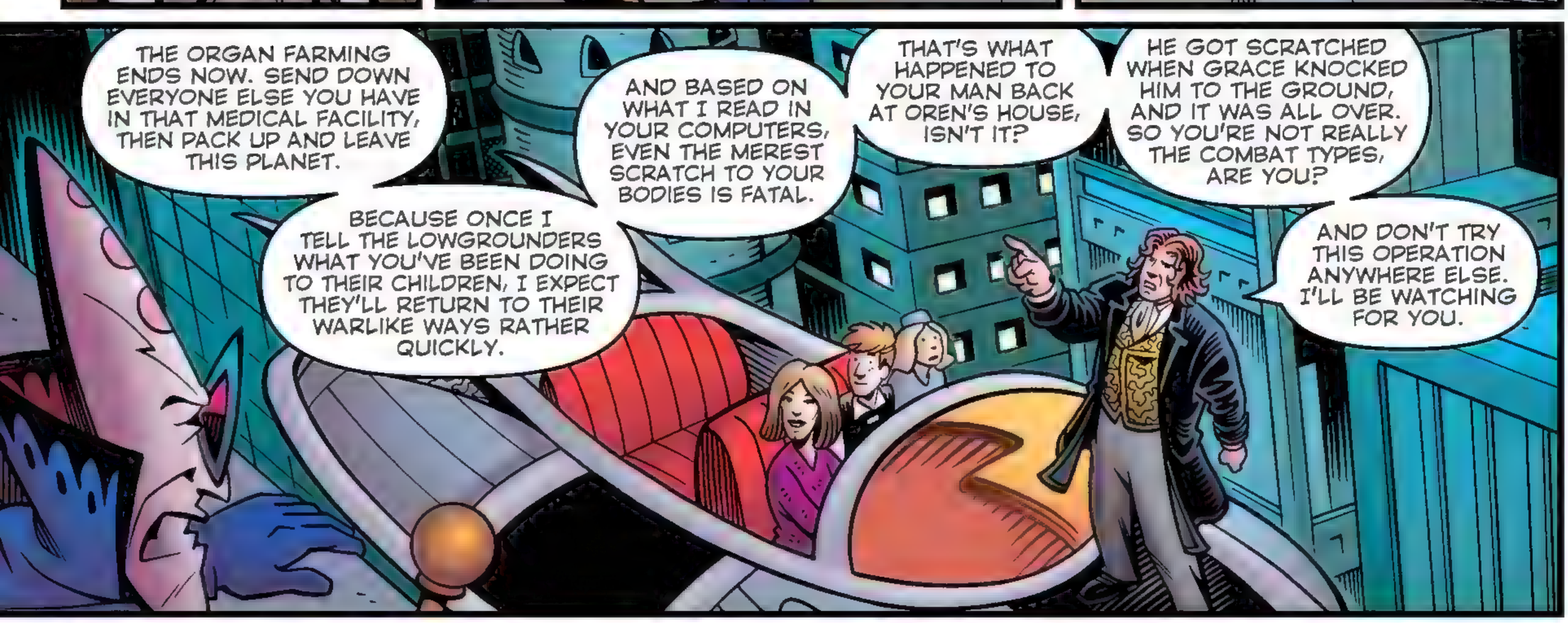

THERE'S NOWHERE ELSE TO GO, DOCTOR.
OH, THERE'S ALWAYS SOMEPLACE ELSE TO GO.
IN FACT, YOU'LL ALL BE GOING SOMEWHERE ELSE SOON.
YOUR DAYS OF VICTIMIZING THIS WORLD ARE OVER.

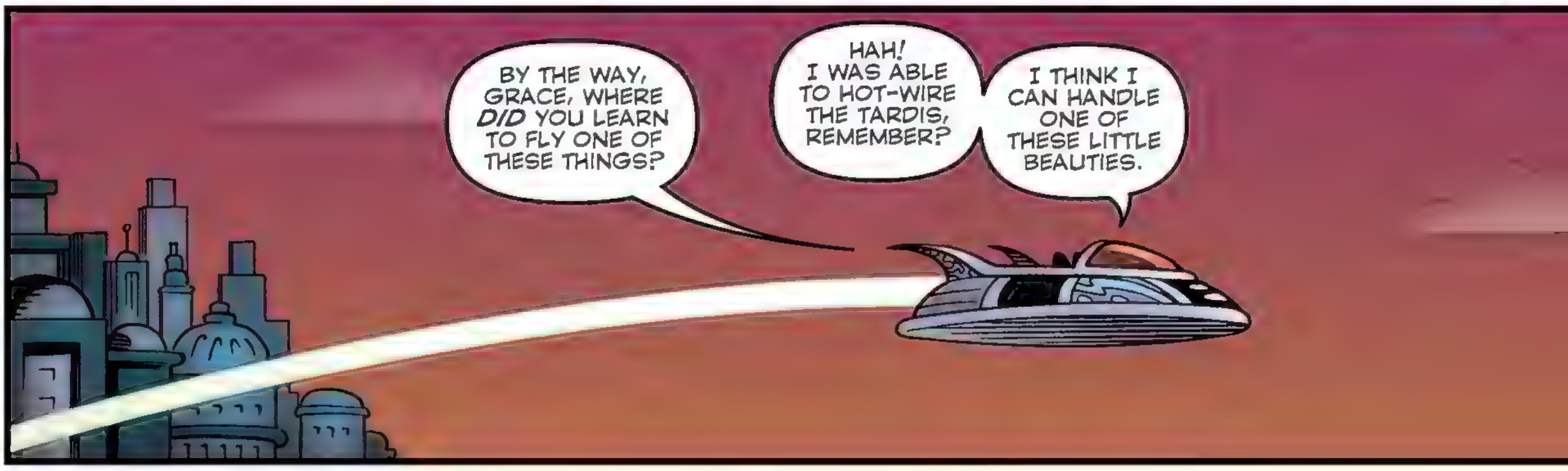
YES, I KNOW ALL ABOUT IT. 'THE ASCENDED'? THEY'RE NO MORE THAN UNWILLING ORGAN DONORS FOR YOUR PEOPLE. THEY'VE BEEN KEEPING YOUR SAD SPECIES ALIVE FOR GENERATIONS. IT ENDS *NOW*.

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?
I'M THE DOCTOR.

NOOOO!




THE ORGAN FARMING ENDS NOW. SEND DOWN EVERYONE ELSE YOU HAVE IN THAT MEDICAL FACILITY, THEN PACK UP AND LEAVE THIS PLANET.
BECAUSE ONCE I TELL THE LOWGROUNDERS WHAT YOU'VE BEEN DOING TO THEIR CHILDREN, I EXPECT THEY'LL RETURN TO THEIR WARLIKE WAYS RATHER QUICKLY.
AND BASED ON WHAT I READ IN YOUR COMPUTERS, EVEN THE MEREST SCRATCH TO YOUR BODIES IS FATAL.
THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR MAN BACK AT OREN'S HOUSE, ISN'T IT?
HE GOT SCRATCHED WHEN GRACE KNOCKED HIM TO THE GROUND, AND IT WAS ALL OVER. SO YOU'RE NOT REALLY THE COMBAT TYPES, ARE YOU?
AND DON'T TRY THIS OPERATION ANYWHERE ELSE. I'LL BE WATCHING FOR YOU.


BY THE WAY, GRACE, WHERE *DID* YOU LEARN TO FLY ONE OF THESE THINGS?
HAH! I WAS ABLE TO HOT-WIRE THE TARDIS, REMEMBER?
I THINK I CAN HANDLE ONE OF THESE LITTLE BEAUTIES.

HOW COULD THEY HAVE DONE SUCH A THING, DOCTOR?

FEAR CAN DRIVE THE MIND TO ACCEPT THE MOST HIDEOUS PROSPECTS.

FEAR OF DEATH, OF EXTINCTION. IT CAN OVERRULE MERCY, REASON, EVEN SANITY, IF YOU ALLOW IT.

WHAT ABOUT US, DOCTOR? WHAT NOW?

NOW YOUR PEOPLE CAN START A LIFE HERE TRULY FOR YOURSELVES. YOU HAVE EVERYTHING YOU NEED; YOU ALWAYS DID.

I'VE TOLD YOUR FAMILIES AND THEIR COUNCILS ABOUT WHAT THE OVERSEERS WERE DOING, AND YOU NOW KNOW YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR FROM THEM.

YOU WON'T BE SEEING THEM AGAIN. LIVE YOUR LIVES.

THANK YOU, DOCTOR!

THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING!

DOCTOR...

HMM?

ABOUT 'STARTING A LIFE...'

POLICE

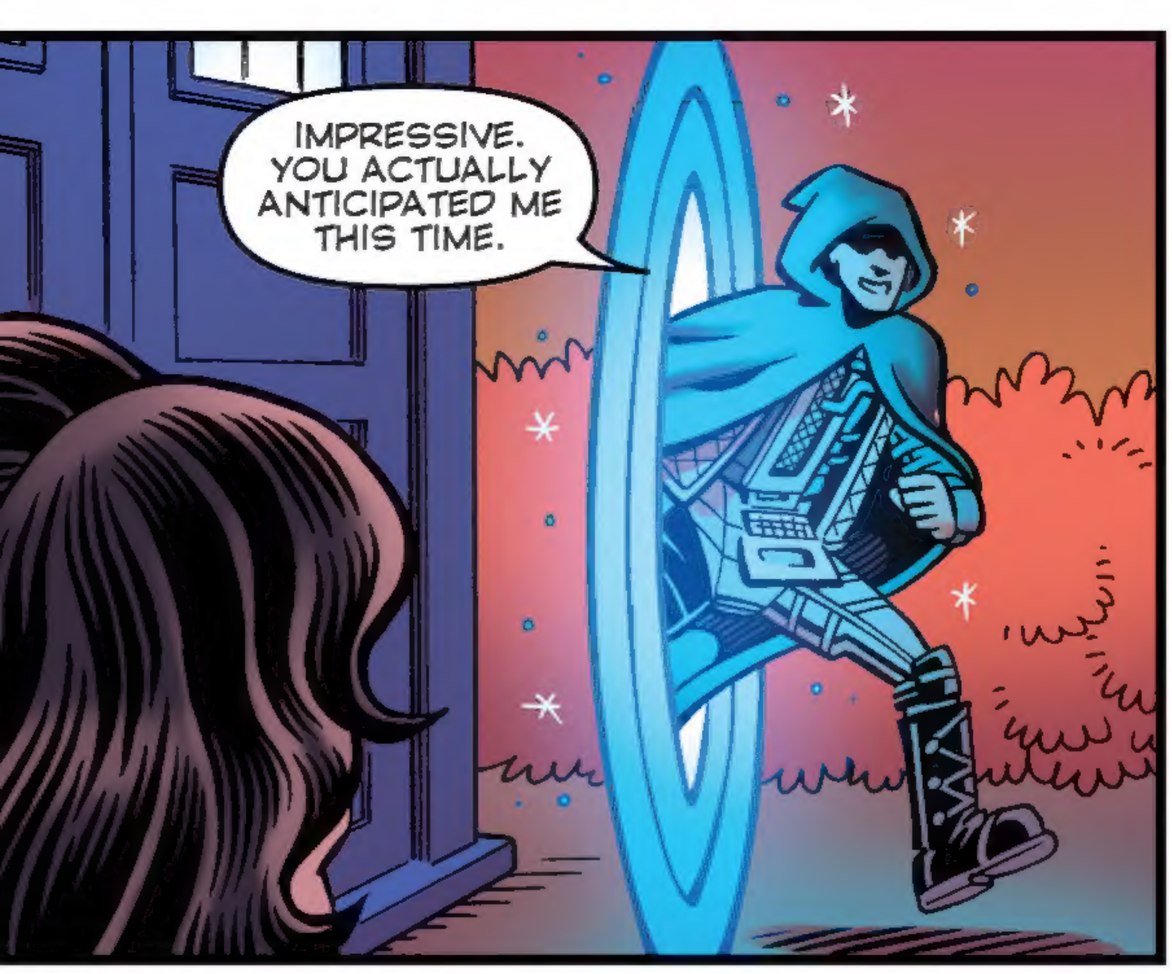
THIS ONE'S NOT FOR ME. I LEAPT INTO ACTION WHEN THIS ALL STARTED, BUT THE HIGHS AND LOWS OF YOUR LIFE ARE TOO MUCH FOR ME.

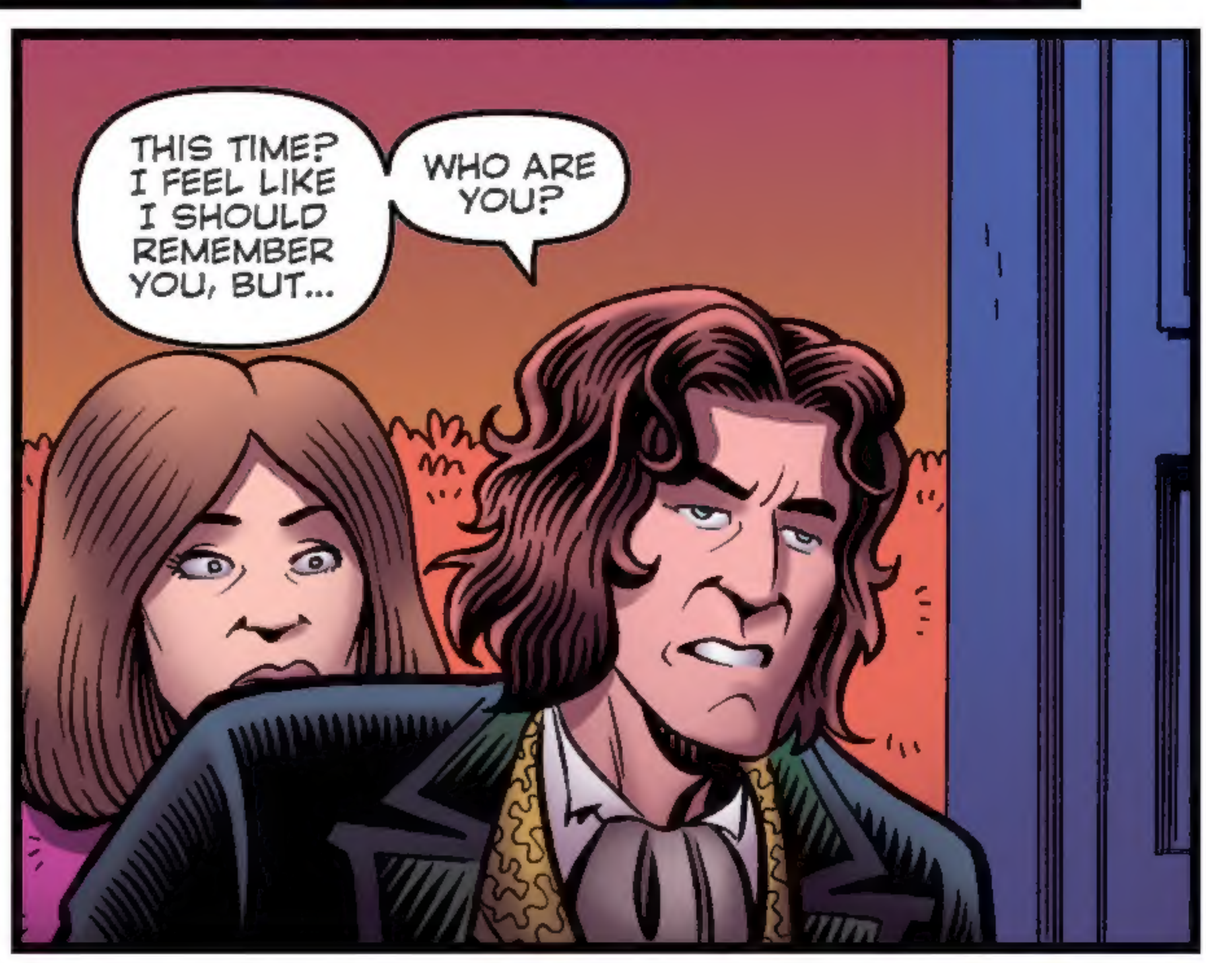
BESIDES, I HAVE A LIFE ALREADY, BACK IN SAN FRANCISCO.

AND IT MEANS AS MUCH TO ME AS DOING THIS—MAKING A DIFFERENCE OUT HERE—DOES TO YOU.

OLICE PUBLIC CALL BOX
OF COURSE, GRACE. I UNDERSTAND. TRAVELLING'S NOT FOR EVERYONE.

IT'S VERY UNPREDICTABLE, AND ONE ALWAYS MUST LOOK OUT FOR UNWELCOME VISITORS.
ISN'T THAT RIGHT?


IMPRESSIVE. YOU ACTUALLY ANTICIPATED ME THIS TIME.

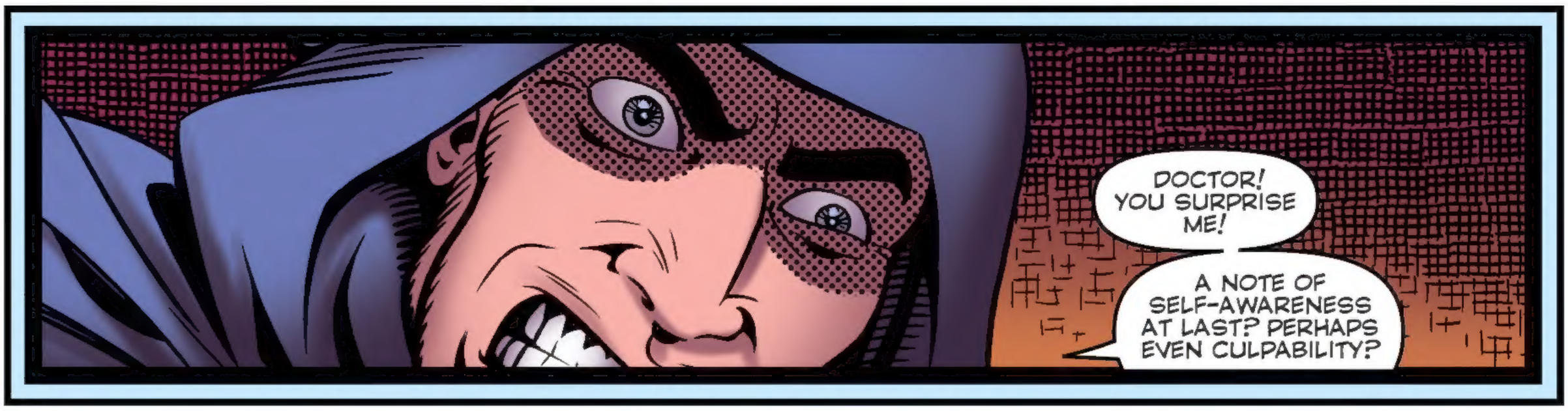

THIS TIME? I FEEL LIKE I SHOULD REMEMBER YOU, BUT...
WHO ARE YOU?

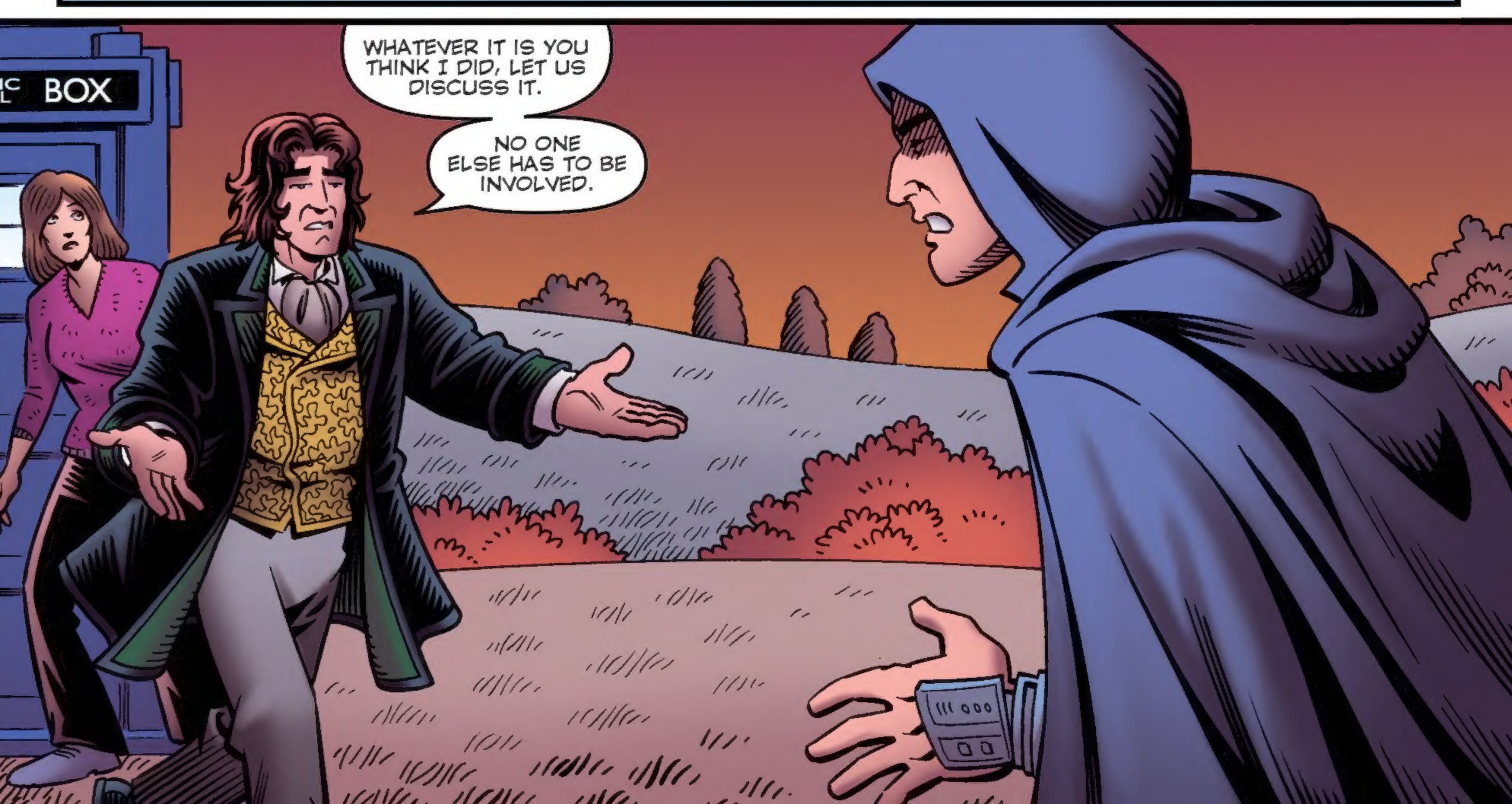
WHO AM I? I'M YOUR MISTAKES COME TO LIFE, DOCTOR.
I'M YOUR PAST COME HOME TO ROOST.

I'M YOUR FUTURE, DOCTOR, AND I WILL BE YOUR END.

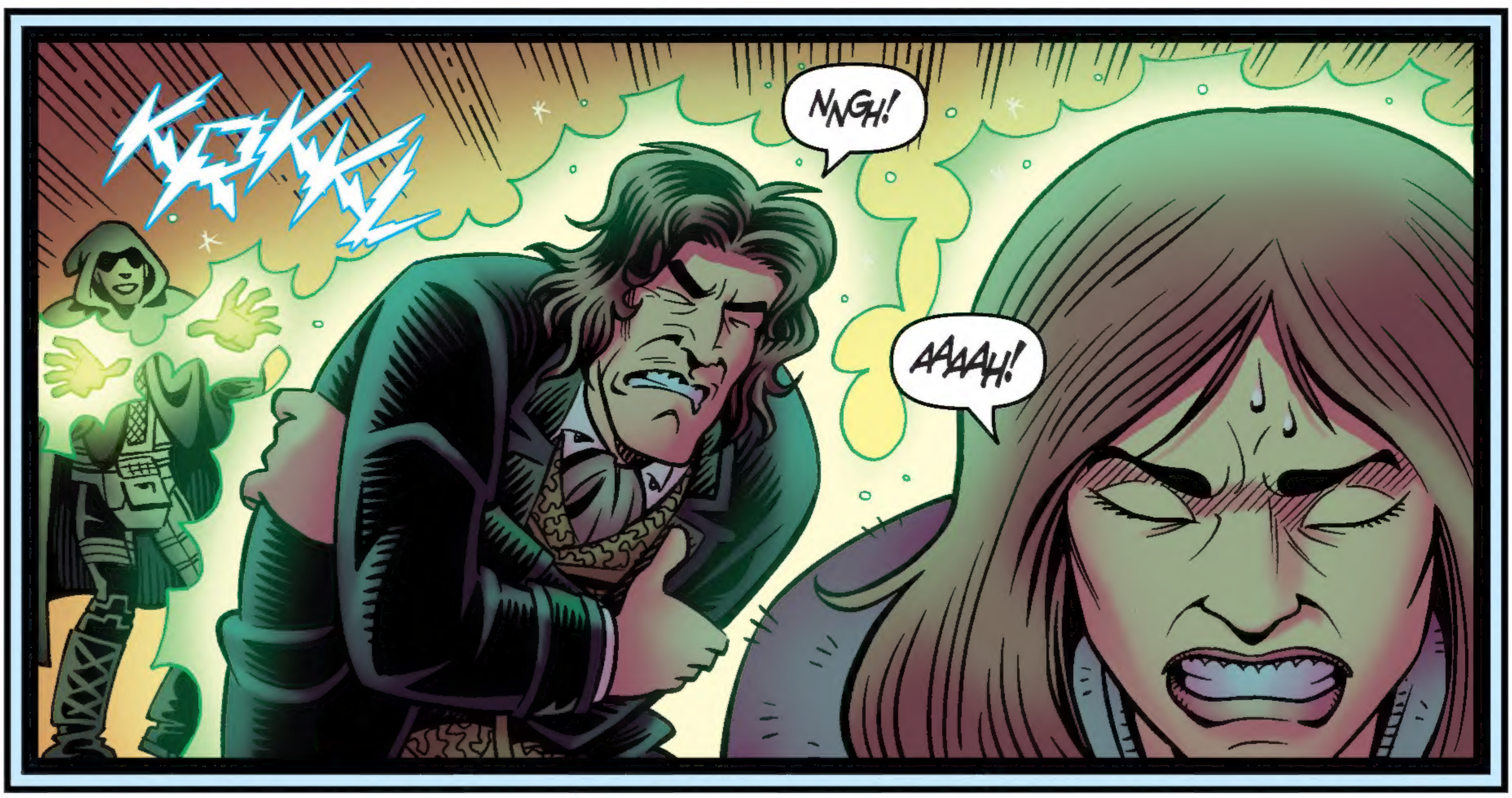
YOURS AND ANYONE FOOL ENOUGH TO TRUST YOU.

TRUST ME? LIKE YOU DID?


DOCTOR! YOU SURPRISE ME!
A NOTE OF SELF-AWARENESS AT LAST? PERHAPS EVEN CULPABILITY?


BOX
WHATEVER IT IS YOU THINK I DID, LET US DISCUSS IT.
NO ONE ELSE HAS TO BE INVOLVED.

'NO ONE ELSE HAS TO BE INVOLVED'. HOW QUAINT. PITY YOU NEVER TAKE YOUR OWN ADVICE.


KRKKL
NNGH!
AAAAH!

I COULD KILL YOU NOW, 'OLD FRIEND', BUT YOU'VE NOT SUFFERED NEARLY ENOUGH.
DON'T WORRY, THOUGH. THE END IS COMING SOON. FOR ALL OF YOU.

FWASH
END OF CHAPTER 8.
POLICE
GRACE...

REFLECTIONS OF TIME

Wherein prominent Whovians past and present muse upon the Doctor's history in comic form.

It was 1996. The Fugees' *Killing Me Softly* was No. 1. Bill Clinton was president. No one you've ever heard of was prime minister. The Internet was steam-powered.

And *Doctor Who* was coming back to life on TV after a seven-year drought! I have to confess, I wasn't expecting to like the Paul McGann TV movie. I had read the script a few weeks earlier and had been a tad underwhelmed. But Geoff Sax's direction was so much more sophisticated than anything the show had seen before and the production values were fantastic. Best of all, McGann's performance was a perfect blend of charm, danger, silliness, and genius—he simply was the Doctor, effortlessly, brilliantly.

And 90 minutes later he was gone. The TV movie went up against the 'Dan's heart attack' episode of *Roseanne* in the U.S. and was clobbered in the ratings. It was all over. There was no ongoing series, no further specials, nothing. At least on TV...

Ah, but the comics were a different story! At *Doctor Who Magazine*, we immediately got to work on new Eighth Doctor adventures for our regular comic-strip section. It was an exciting time—we had been handed a fantastic new Doctor who had proven instantly popular with the fans. He had a distinct visual style that easily translated into illustration. Most important, he came without any restrictions—we could do whatever we liked with him. Total freedom!

Alan Barnes came aboard as the regular writer and was joined by artist Martin Geraghty, then a rising star at Marvel UK. Alan and Martin created a new companion: Izzy S, a sci-fi 'geekette' who became an instant hit with the readership. The Doctor and Izzy battled the Celestial Toymaker, the Daleks, alien vampires, rogue Time Lords, and the sinister mercenaries called the Threshold. People sat up, took notice, and got excited!

Alan moved on to great things as the editor of *The Judge Dredd Megazine* and later became the script editor for Big Finish's *Doctor Who* audio range. I took over writing the comic strip. Martin and I sent the Doctor and Izzy to London for a reunion with Grace Holloway, then to an adventure in 10th-century Japan. Our heroes encountered a figure from the *DWM* strip's past: Kroton, a Cyberman with emotions, and the trio took on the Master in an epic 10-part story, *The Glorious Dead*.

The comic strip shifted to full-colour. An amoral fish-girl called Destrii muscled her way into the stories, making life very difficult for the Doctor and Izzy. They faced Necrotists, the Horde, the Mobox, and a unique tribe of benevolent Daleks. Izzy went home and Destrii gained a conscience. It was a brilliant, creative time for everyone involved. In addition to Martin Geraghty, I had the pleasure of working with stellar artists Adrian Salmon, Lee Sullivan, Roger Langridge, Anthony Williams, and John Ross.

The final story, *The Flood*, saw Cybermen from the future laying claim to Earth. It arrived on the eve of *Doctor Who*'s return to British TV screens in 2005 and, I'm happy to report, turned out to be the most popular story Martin and I produced. The Doctor and Destrii walked off into the sunset, happy and triumphant. We were sorry to see them go. From 90 minutes of television, the Eighth Doctor had gone on to enjoy a solid nine years as the resident hero of *Doctor Who Magazine*. Happy times!

—Scott Gray,
former *Doctor Who Magazine* assistant editor and writer